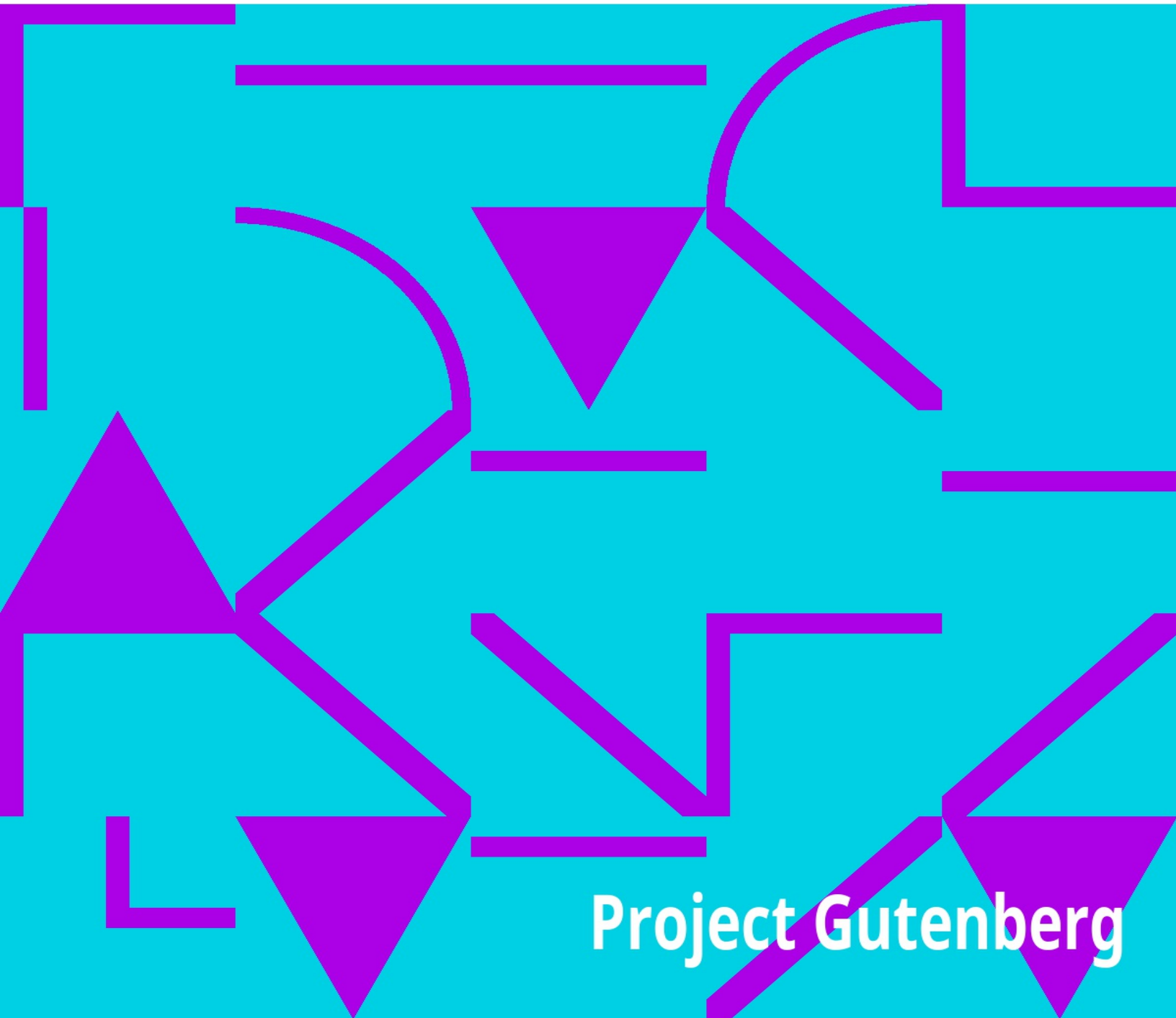
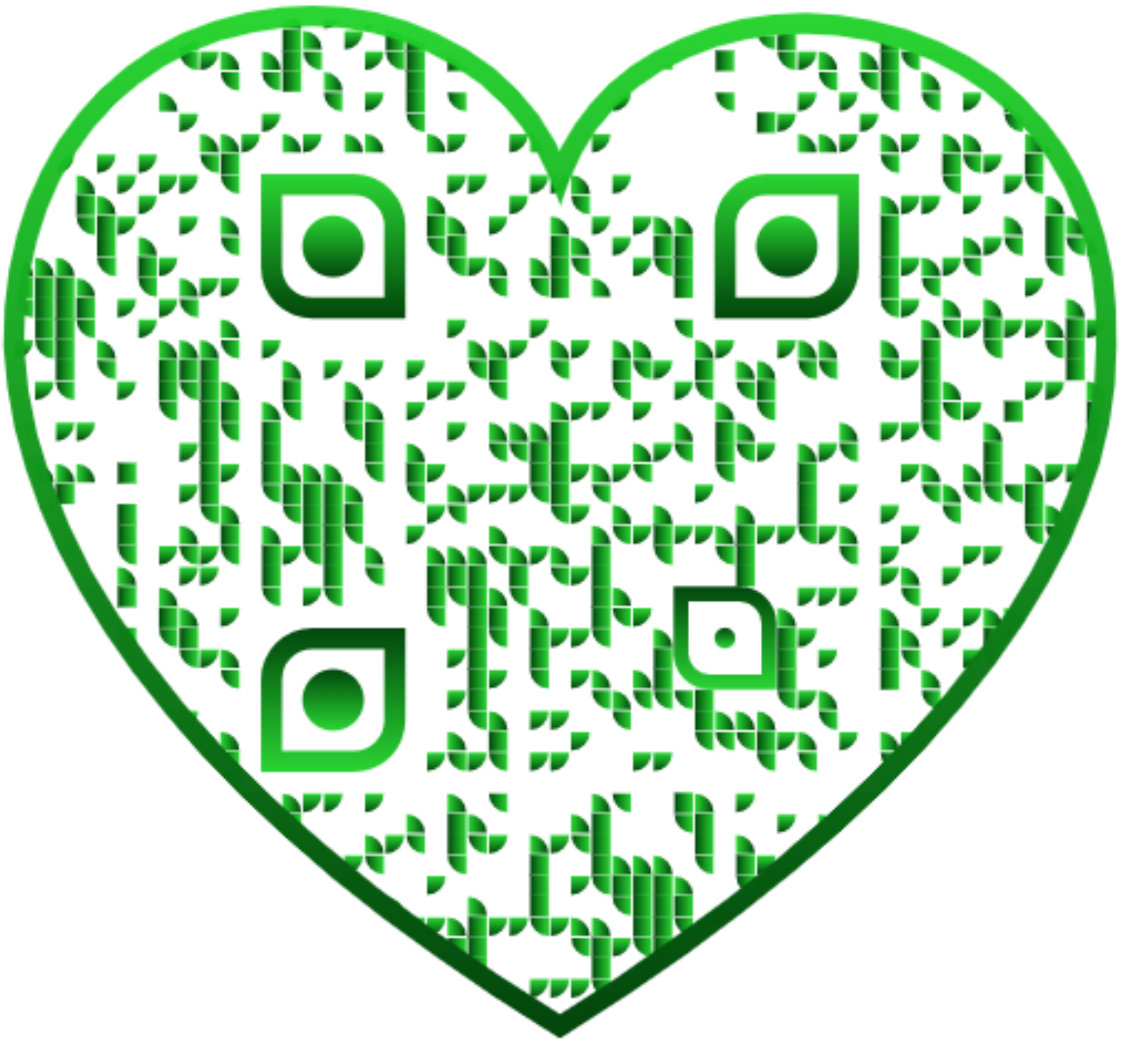
Occultism and Common-Sense

Beckles Willson





BY BECKLES WILLSON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
PROF. W. F. BARRETT, F.R.S.

Past President of the Society for Psychical Research

LONDON
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	vii
I. SCIENCE'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE "SUPERNATURAL"	1
II. THE HYPNOTIC STATE	13
III. PHANTASMS OF THE LIVING	35
IV. DREAMS	59
V. HALLUCINATIONS	82
VI. PHANTASMS OF THE DEAD	100
VII. ON "HAUNTINGS" AND KINDRED PHENOMENA	124
VIII. THE DOWSING OR DIVINING ROD	159
IX. MEDIUMISTIC PHENOMENA	180
X. MORE PHYSICAL PHENOMENA	201
XI. THE MATERIALISATION OF "GHOSTS"	217
XII. SPIRIT-PHOTOGRAPHY	235
XIII. CLAIRVOYANCE	251
XIV. MRS PIPER'S TRANCE UTTERANCES	271
AFTERWORD	288
Publications of T. Werner Laurie.	

INTRODUCTION

By Professor W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.

Those of us who took part in the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research were convinced from personal investigation and from the testimony of competent witnesses that, amidst much illusion and deception, there existed an important body of facts, hitherto unrecognised by science, which, if incontestably established, would be of supreme interest and importance.

It was hoped that by applying scientific methods to their systematic investigation these obscure phenomena might eventually be rescued from the disorderly mystery of ignorance; (but we recognised that this would be a work, not of one generation but of many.) Hence to preserve continuity of effort it was necessary to form a society, the aim of which should be, as we stated at the outset, to bring to bear on these obscure questions the same spirit of exact and unimpassioned inquiry which has enabled science to solve so many problems once not less obscure nor less hotly debated. And such success as the society has achieved is in no small measure due to the wise counsel and ungrudging expenditure both of time and means which the late Professor Henry Sidgwick gave, and which Mrs Sidgwick continues to give, to all the details of its work.

Turning now to the author of the following pages, everyone must recognise the industry he has shown and the fairness of spirit he has endeavoured to maintain. With different groups of phenomena, the evidential value varies enormously. The testimony of honest and even careful witnesses requires to be received with caution, owing to the intrusion of two sources of error to which untrained observers are very liable. These are unconscious mal-observation *and unintentional* mis-description. *I cannot here enter into the proof of this statement, but it is fully established. Oddly enough, not only a credulous observer but a cynical or ferocious sceptic is singularly prone to these errors when, for the first time, he is induced to investigate psychical phenomena which, in the pride of his superior intelligence, he has hitherto scorned. I could give some amusing illustrations of this within my own*

knowledge. For instance, a clever but critical friend who had frequently scoffed at the evidence for thought-transference published in the "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research," one day seriously informed me he had been converted to a belief in thought-transference by some conclusive experiments he had witnessed. Upon inquiring where these experiments took place I found it was at a public performance of a very inferior Zancig who was then touring through the provinces!

Mr Beckles Willson frankly tells us that "the light heart and open mind" with which he set forth on his inquiry deserted him before he drew his labours to a close. For, entering upon the subject as a novice, he found himself unexpectedly confronted by the mass of evidence and the numerous and profoundly difficult problems which the Psychical Society have had to face. His conclusions are derived from a study of the available evidence, and this study has convinced him—as it has convinced, so far as I know, every other painstaking and honest inquirer—that no theories based on fraud, illusion, nor even on telepathy, are adequate to account for the whole of the phenomena he has reviewed. Contrary to his prepossessions, Mr Willson tells us that he has been led to the conclusion that the only satisfactory explanation of these phenomena is the action of discarnate human beings—that is to say, the Spiritualistic hypothesis.

I can hardly suppose he means to apply this statement to more than the small residue of phenomena which he finds inexplicable on any other hypothesis. Assuming this restricted view to be meant, the question arises, Is the evidence on which it is based sufficiently abundant, trustworthy, *and* conclusive, *to warrant such a far-reaching statement? Here we must turn from the author to ascertain what has been the conclusion arrived at by those who have given long years to a searching experimental investigation of these phenomena, and who have approached the subject in a scientific and judicial spirit. The most noteworthy instance is the testimony of that shrewd and able investigator, the late Dr Hodgson. His patient and laborious inquiry into the trance phenomena of Mrs Piper ultimately led him to the conclusion arrived at by Mr Willson. Dr Hodgson's well-known exposure of Madame Blavatsky and other fraudulent mediums and his sane and cautious judgment render his opinion of great weight. Then, again, we find that this also was the conclusion to which Frederic Myers was gradually driven. And long prior to this it was the conclusion arrived at by that acute thinker, the late Professor*

de Morgan, and it is the conclusion strongly held by the great naturalist, Dr A. R. Wallace, and held also by several other eminent investigators I might name.

So momentous a conclusion, if capable of such complete verification as to be universally accepted by science, would obviously throw all other discoveries into the background. I say if capable of being verified by scientific methods, but, although the weight of opinion will, in my opinion, ultimately lead to a very wide acceptance of this conclusion, yet it seems to me highly probable that the experimental discovery of the survival of human personality after death will always elude conclusive scientific demonstration. This particular field of psychical investigation belongs to an order other than that with which science deals; and, this being so, it can never be adequately investigated with the limited faculties we now possess.

In any case, as I said in a letter published in The Times, *so long ago as September 1876, before science is in a position to frame any satisfactory hypothesis of the so-called Spiritualistic phenomena, a number of antecedent questions will have to be investigated and decided. Prominent among these, I urged more than thirty years ago, was the question whether ideas or information can be voluntarily or involuntarily transferred from one mind to another independently of the recognised organs of perception. Experiments I had then recently made led me to the conclusion that something new to science, which might provisionally be called thought-transference, now known in its wider aspect as telepathy, did really exist. This, if established, would, as I pointed out, unquestionably solve some of the so-called spirit communications which had so puzzled investigators. But the idea of thought-transference was at that time just as obnoxious to official science as Spiritualism. Mr Willson quotes the implacable disbelief, even in the possibility of telepathy, which that great man Helmholtz expressed to me. And it is amusing now to recall the fierce outcry aroused by the paper I read at the British Association meeting in 1876, when, after narrating certain apparently transcendental phenomena I had witnessed, I asked that a committee of scientific men should be appointed to investigate preliminary question of the possibility of thought-transference.*[1] *It is true the evidence on behalf of telepathy has since become so abundant that now few deny its probability, but even telepathy has not yet taken its place among the recognised scientific verities. I hope this recognition will not be long delayed,*

but until it occurs it is almost as illegitimate to use telepathy, as some do so freely, for the foundation of their theories of transcendental phenomena as to use the spiritualistic hypothesis itself.

To those who have carefully studied the evidence there is, however, little doubt that telepathy does afford an adequate explanation of certain well-attested phenomena, such as phantasms of the living or dying person. And telepathy, which may now be considered as highly probable, leads on to the evidence for man's survival after death—to this I will return later on.

Then, again, recent investigations have established the fact that the range of human personality must be extended to include something more than our normal self-consciousness. Our Ego is not the simple unitary thing older psychologists taught, but a composite structure embracing a self that extends far beyond the limit of our conscious waking life. Just as experimental physics has shown that each pencil of sunlight embraces an almost endless succession of invisible rays as well as the visible radiation we perceive, so experimental psychology has shown that each human personality embraces an unconscious as well as a conscious self. Mr Myers, using Du Perl's conception of a threshold, has termed the former our subliminal self. *And just as the invisible radiation of the sun can only be rendered perceptible by some agency outside our vision, so this subliminal self reveals itself only by some agency outside our own volition. The subliminal self not only contains the record of unheeded past impressions—a latent memory—but also has activities and faculties far transcending the range of our conscious self. In this it also resembles the invisible radiation of the sun, which is the main source of life and energy in this world.*

Certainly the everyday processes of the development, nutrition, and repair of our body and brain, which go on automatically and unconsciously within us, are far beyond the powers of our conscious personality. All life shares with us this miraculous automatism. No chemist, with all his appliances, can turn breadstuff into brainstuff or hay into milk. Further, the subliminal self seems to have faculties which can be emancipated from the limitations of our ordinary life. Glimpses of this we get when the conscious self is in abeyance, as in sleep, hypnosis, and trance. Here and there we find certain individuals through whom this sub- or supra-liminal self manifests itself more freely than through others; they have been termed "mediums," a word, it is true, that

suggests Browning's "Sludge." But, as scientific investigation has shown all mesmerists and dowsers are not charlatans, so it has shown all mediums are not rogues.

This extension of human faculty, revealing, as it does, more profoundly the mysterious depths of our being, enables us to explain many phenomena that have been attributed to discarnate human beings. The question arises, Does it explain all so-called Spiritualistic phenomena? In my opinion, and in that of others who have given more time to their critical investigation than I have, it does not. At present we have to grope our way, but the ground is being cleared, and the direction which the future explorer of these unknown regions has to take is becoming more evident.

Occultism and Common-Sense

CHAPTER I

SCIENCE'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE "SUPERNATURAL"

When I first ventured into the wide and misty domain of Occultism, with a light heart I set forth and an open mind. My sole aim was to ascertain, as far as the means at the disposal of an ordinary man with little of the mystic in his composition would allow, what degree of probability attached to published phenomena, which the ordinary laws of Nature, as most of us understand them, could not satisfactorily explain.

At the threshold of my inquiry, one prominent and, as it seemed to me, disconcerting fact confronted me—namely, that although for a couple of generations "supernatural" manifestations had been promiscuously exhibited before the public, challenging full investigation and inviting belief; although almost every day the newspapers report some striking case of spirit apparition or materialisation, coincident dreams, clairvoyance, trance utterances, or possession, often seemingly well attested; yet in spite of all this testimony academic science continued to dispute the very basis of such phenomena. Any investigator must needs recognise here a very anomalous situation. On the one hand are, let us say, half-a-million people, often highly intelligent, cultured, sane people, firmly protesting that they have witnessed certain astonishing occult manifestations, and on the other hand the Royal Society and the British Association, and other organised scientific bodies established for the investigation of truth, absolutely refusing to admit such evidence or to regard it seriously. Forty years ago Faraday, besought to give his opinion, in this wise wrote: "They who say they see these things are not competent witnesses of facts. It would be condescension on my part to pay any more attention to them." Faraday's attitude was that of Huxley, Spencer, Tyndall, and Agassiz. The first-named, however, rather gave away his prejudice by saying: "Supposing the phenomena to be genuine, they do not interest me." Tyndall's utterance also deserves to be recalled: "There are people amongst us who, it is alleged, can produce effects before which the discoveries of

Newton pale. There are men of science who would sell all that they have, and give the proceeds to the poor, for a glimpse of phenomena which are mere trifles to the spiritualist." He added: "The world will have religion of some kind, even though it should fly for it to the intellectual whoredom of spiritualism." Spencer's words were: "I have settled the question in my own mind on à priori grounds." Professor Carpenter called spiritualism "a most mischievous epidemic delusion, comparable to the witchcraft delusion of the seventeenth century."

What, then, has happened to strengthen the case of the believers in ghosts, clairvoyance, thought-transference, sensory automatism, in, say, the last quarter of a century? What new evidence exists which would make the mid-Victorian scientific men reconsider their position? Suppose Faraday and Huxley, Spencer and Tyndall, were alive to-day, would they see reason to alter their opinions?

I remember once—and I now give it as typical—overhearing a psychical experience. It was in a first-class compartment on a train coming from Wimbledon. One of my fellow-passengers, an intelligent, well-spoken man of about thirty-five, was relating to three friends the following extraordinary story. As nearly as I can recollect, I give the narrator's own words:—

> "One week ago last Tuesday, at eleven o'clock at night, my wife, who had just retired to bed upstairs, called out to me: 'Arthur! Arthur!' in a tone of alarm. I sprang up and ran upstairs to see what was the matter. The servants had all gone to bed. 'Arthur,' said my wife, 'I've just seen mother,' and she began to cry. 'Why,' I said, 'your mother's at Scarborough.' 'I know,' she said; 'but she appeared before me just there' (pointing to the foot of the bed) 'two minutes ago as plainly as you do.' Well, the next morning there was a telegram on the breakfast-table: 'Mother, died at eleven last night.' Now, how do you account for it?"

There was silence for a full minute.

"A wonderful coincidence. Your wife's hallucination coincided with her mother's death!"

Another occupant of the carriage caught up the word:

"Yes, coincidence. A thing which mightn't happen once in a million years."

Nobody else ventured a remark. Yet they seemed unconvinced. There was no one to tell them—even I did not know then—that these "coincidences" were constantly happening, every year, perhaps every month; that an intelligent body of men—the Society for Psychical Research—has made a census of such hallucinations, all apparently well attested; that newspapers devoted to occult matters constantly record these things; that volumes—monthly, weekly, almost—fairly pour from the press detailing, expounding, dissecting, elaborating such evidence; that the theory of coincidence has already been rejected by many men of the first rank of science; and that official science itself is reluctantly reconsidering its position in more than one direction.

Yet so slowly do the masses move in intellectual life, so tardily do truths, concerning not merely occult but physical and material investigation, percolate through to the workaday world, that the researches, the activities, the ascertained truths of students of psychical phenomena are as a closed book. Perhaps the attitude of apathy with which occult phenomena and occult science are regarded by the average man is not unnatural. To him all miracles that are not Scriptural and ancient and, as it were, institutional are highly improbable, if not impossible. All super-naturalism, he will tell you, is morbid. "There may be something in these things," he says, "but it is not proved. As for spiritualism, my belief is that mediums are impostors. Most of the spiritualists I have seen are 'cranks'—they are certainly dupes—and I have no doubt that if I interested myself in these matters I should end by becoming also a 'crank.'"

This I maintain is the position of the ordinarily educated normal man.

"The moment," wrote Lord Lytton, "one deals with things beyond our comprehension, and in which our own senses are appealed to and baffled, we revolt from the probable, as it appears to the senses of those who have not experienced what we have." Now, that is just what the candid inquirer must avoid throughout his inquiry. It is often difficult to resist employing supernormal hypotheses; but, until normal hypotheses are exhausted, the resistance must be made. On the other hand, it is well to bear in mind Mr Andrew Lang's timely remark, "there is a point at which the explanations of common-sense arouse scepticism."

At all events, not even the most materialistic man-in-the-music-hall, with two eyes in his head, can deny that the great wave of occultism, which twenty years ago seemed to be receding, is again returning with greater force and volume, submerging many of the old sceptical theories and wetting even the utterly callous and ignorant with its spray. It is not so long ago that the very fact of hypnotism was doubted—Mesmer was long regarded as a mere quack—but to-day the induced trance is universally credited. To hypnotism must the miracle of telepathy now be added? Has it really been ascertained, after a thousand experiments and beyond the possibility of error, that a mode of apprehension exists which has no connection with the five senses? For twenty-five years the members of the Society of Psychical Research have carried on their investigations of both sleeping and waking subjects, under every conceivable condition, and are at last fain to announce that such a mystic faculty does exist by which brain can communicate with brain without any known sensory agency.

As to the kind of "ghost" story recorded above, what an exact analogy it bears to the following, to be found in a recent volume of the "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research!" The statement was received from a Madame Broussiloff, of St Petersburg:—

> "On the 16th (28th) of February of this year, between nine and ten o'clock in the evening, I, the undersigned, was sitting in our drawing-room—the small one—facing the large drawing-room, which I could see in its entire length. My husband, his brother, with his wife, and my mother, were also sitting in the same room with me round a large round table. I was writing down my household accounts for the day, while the others were carrying on some gay conversation. Having accidentally raised my head and looked into the large drawing-room, I noticed, with astonishment, that a large grey shadow had passed from the door of the dining-room to that of the antechamber; and it came into my head that the figure I had seen bore a striking resemblance in stature to Colonel Ave-Meinander, an acquaintance of ours, who had lived in this very lodging for a long time. At the first moment, I wished to say at once that a ghost had just flashed before me, but stopped, as I was afraid of being laughed at by my husband's brother and his wife, and also of being scolded by my husband, who, in view of the excitement which I showed when such phenomena were taking place, tried to convince me that they

were the fruits of my fancy. As I knew that Meinander was alive and well, and was commander of the Malorossüsky 40th Regiment of Dragoons, I did not say anything then; but when I was going to bed I related to my mother what I had seen, and the next morning could not refrain from mentioning it to my husband.

"Our astonishment was extreme when, on the 18th of February (2nd of March), we learned Nicholas Ottovitch Ave-Meinander had actually died after a short illness on the 16th (28th) of February at nine o'clock in the evening, in the town of Strashovo, where his regiment is stationed.

"The above account is confirmed by the percipient's mother, Marie von Hagemeister, and by the husband, Colonel Alexis Alexeievitch Broussiloff. Both state solemnly that Colonel Meinander died at nine P.M. on the evening of 16th February (28th) at Stashovo, 1200 versts from St Petersburg."

To explain this phenomenon in the terms of telepathy, the grey shadow seen by Madame Broussiloff was not a ghost, not the "bodiless spirit in the likeness of a man," but "a waking dream projected from the brain of the seer under the impulse of the dying man's thought."

But telepathy itself requires consideration and explanation. Sir William Crookes has repeatedly given publicity to his theory of brain-waves and to a kindred conception of ether substance, along which intelligence can be transmitted at an almost incalculable rate of speed to virtually interminable distances.

That mind should effect mind in a new mode may mean no more than that brain can act upon brain by means of ethereal vibrations hitherto unsuspected. The power itself may be but a lingering vestige of our inheritance from primeval times, a long-disused faculty "dragged from the dim lumber-room of a primitive consciousness, and galvanised into a belated and halting activity."

Or, on the other hand, may not such faculty be regarded not as vestigial, but as rudimentary? Telepathy, if we follow the gifted author of "Human Personality," is a promise for the future, not an idle inheritance from the past.

Our business now is, all mystic speculations apart, to consider the phenomena in the order in which, if not yet actually accepted, they would seem to evoke least opposition from the academic science of the day. What is the net result of the evidence for all classes of supernormal phenomena? That I shall endeavour to point out, as concisely and lucidly as I can, in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

THE HYPNOTIC STATE

Not least of the wonders of modern psychical research is the discovery that nothing in all the phenomena is new—that under other names and by other races every sort of manifestation was familiar to the most remote peoples. This would certainly seem to meet the argument of the physicist—it is not necessary to refer again to Professor Tyndall's uncomplimentary phraseology—who declares that all this popular occultism is a product of the last generation or two. Take hypnotism. Hypnotism (or mesmerism) was formerly alleged to be an emanation from the body—an effluence of intense will-power. The belief in such an emanation is centuries old. "By the magic power of the will," wrote Paracelsus, "a person on this side of the ocean may make a person on the other side hear what is said on that side ... the ethereal body of a man may know what another man thinks at a distance of 100 miles or more." Twenty years ago this creed was laughed out of court by Huxley, Tyndall, and other leading men of science. To-day we are told by those who have witnessed the experiments of Charcot, Janet, and others that "the existence of an aura of spirit-force surrounding the body like an atmosphere, in some cases at all events, can be proved as a physical fact."

Whatever the explanation, whatever the definition of this miraculous agency, hypnotism is now universally accepted. The manifestations of its power must convince the most sceptical. A spell-bound subject is frequently made to share the sensations of the hypnotist, his ocular perceptions and his sense of touch. In the hypnotic sleep the subject easily becomes insensible to pain. A member of the Society reports that he has seen a youth in this condition who suffered gladly the most injurious attacks upon his own person—who would allow his hair to be pulled, his ears pinched, his fingers even to be scorched by lighted matches. But the same youth would next moment indignantly resent the slightest injury upon his hypnotiser, who would at the time be standing at the other end of the room.

One thing in common all the hypnotic methods appear to possess, the

diversion of attention from external surroundings and the working of a sub-consciousness in a manner not characteristic of the ordinary life of the subject. In cases described by Mr Greenwood no difficulty was encountered in impersonations suggested to the subject unless they savoured too much of the ridiculous. "Thus," he writes, "a suggestion that M., the subject, was myself and that I was he succeeded; and in his reverse capacity he continued the course of experiments upon himself, devising several original and ingenious varieties to which I, for the sake of the experiment, acquiesced in subjecting myself. He also behaved with considerable dignity and verve as King Edward VII., until I threw a match at his head, a proceeding which appeared to conflict so strongly with dramatic verisimilitude that he lapsed back into his ordinary hypnotic condition, nor could I reinduce the impersonation. On the other hand, statements that he was the Emperor of China, and that he was a nurse and I a baby, failed to carry any conviction, being either received with passive consent or rejected with scorn." It is interesting to note that in the waking state of the subject he explained that he was only conscious that he was not the characters he was bidden to assume, and if asked would have said as much, but that he was irresistibly impelled to act as though he were.

The production of sleep in the subject at a distance is one of the latest attested marvels of hypnotism. The long series of experiments made in France by Professor Richet and Professor Janet would appear to attest this power. In some trials made at Havre, in which the experimenters were Professor Janet and Dr Gibert, the subject of the experiment was a certain Madame B. or "Léonie," then a patient of Dr Gibert. The facts were recorded by the late F. W. Myers and his brother, Dr A. T. Myers, who were present:

> "We selected (he states) by lot an hour (eleven A.M.) at which M. Gibert should will, from his dispensary (which is close to his house), that Madame B. should go to sleep in the Pavilion. It was agreed that a rather longer time should be allowed for the process to take effect, as it had been observed that she sometimes struggled against the influence and averted the effect for a time by putting her hands in cold water, etc. At 11.25 we entered the Pavilion quietly, and almost at once she descended from her room to the *salon*, profoundly asleep. We did not, of course, mention M. Gibert's attempt of the previous night. But she told us in her sleep that she had been very ill in the night, and repeatedly exclaimed:

'Pourquoi M. Gibert m'a-t-il fait souffrir? Mais j'ai lavé les mains continuellement.' This is what she does when she wishes to avoid being influenced.

"In the evening (22nd) we all dined at M. Gibert's, and in the evening M. Gibert made another attempt to put her to sleep at a distance from his house in the Rue Sery—she being at the Pavilion, Rue de la Ferme—and to bring her to his house by an effort of will. At 8.55 he retired to his study; and MM. Ochorowicz, Marillier, Janet, and A. T. Myers went to the Pavilion, and waited outside in the street, out of sight of the house. At 9.22 Dr Myers observed Madame B. coming half way out of the garden gate, and again retreating. Those who saw her more closely observed that she was plainly in the somnambulistic state and was wandering about and muttering. At 9.25 she came out with eyes persistently closed, so far as could be seen, walked quickly past MM. Janet and Marillier without noticing them, and made for M. Gibert's house, though not by the usual or shortest route. (It appeared afterwards that the bonne had seen her go into the *salon* at 8.45 and issue thence asleep at 9.15; had not looked in between those times.) She avoided lamp-posts, vehicles, etc., but crossed and recrossed the street repeatedly. No one went in front of her or spoke to her. After eight or ten minutes she grew more uncertain in gait, and paused as though she would fall. Dr Myers noted the moment in the Rue Faure; it was 9.35. At about 9.40 she grew bolder, and at 9.45 reached the street in front of M. Gibert's house. There she met him, but did not notice him, and walked into his house, where she rushed hurriedly from room to room on the ground floor. M. Gibert had to take her hand before she recognised him. She then grew calm.

"On the 23rd M. Janet lunched in our company and retired to his own house at 4.30 (a time chosen by lot), to try to put her to sleep from thence. At 5.5 we all entered the *salon* of the Pavilion, and found her asleep with shut eyes, but sewing vigorously (being in that stage in which movements once suggested are automatically continued). Passing into the talkative stage, she said to M. Janet: 'C'est vous qui m'avez fait dormir à quatre heures et demi.' The impression as to the hour may have been a suggestion received from M. Janet's mind. We tried to make her believe that it was M. Gibert who had sent her to sleep, but she

maintained that she had felt that it was M. Janet.

> "On 24th April the whole party chanced to meet at M. Janet's house at three P.M., and he then, at my suggestion, entered his study to will that Madame B. should sleep. We waited in his garden, and at 3.20 proceeded together to the Pavilion, which I entered first at 3.30, and found Madame B. profoundly sleeping over her sewing, having ceased to sew. Becoming talkative, she said to M. Janet: 'C'est vous qui m'avez commandé.' She said that she fell asleep at 3.5 P.M."

Of the twenty-five trials made in the course of two months, eighteen were wholly and four partially successful.

This somnolent state might, it is thought, have been induced by telepathy; in fact, as we shall see, telepathy will in some quarters have to bear the burden of most, if not all, of the phenomena under investigation.

Not only is the hypnotic subject frequently induced to do the will of the operator, but he may actually have presented to his intelligence certain ideas or images, material or imaginary, known only to the hypnotiser. After following carefully all the experiments conducted by the late Professor Sidgwick and others, in the presence of witnesses of repute, I do not see how it is possible to deny the fact of telepathy. In these experiments the subject or percipient was always hypnotised, remaining so to a varying degree throughout the experiment.

Albeit, even as regards this thought-transference, we must be on our guard against a too rash acceptance of unknown or supernormal agencies in every bona-fide experiment. Certainly all experiments of the hypnotiser do not *ipso facto* prove that any new method of apprehension has been employed. The hypnotised subject is extremely susceptible to suggestions, and might even glean an indication of what is proceeding through the look, the gestures, the very breathing, of those present. The utmost precautions, therefore, were taken by the Society for Psychical Research when it began its experimental inquiries.

The subject of the picture was always carefully chosen by one of the experimenters—Mrs Sidgwick or Miss Alice Johnson. Any possibility of the percipient being able to guess at the subject through chance, association, or

ideas was rigorously excluded. To prevent any hint being unconsciously imparted by the third experimenter, Mr G. A. Smith, silence was enjoined upon him, and he was placed behind the percipient or in another room; yet the percipient actually saw and described the projecting impression as if it were a real picture before his eyes. When Mr Smith went downstairs with Miss Johnson he was asked by her to think of an eagle pursuing a sparrow. Mrs Sidgwick, who remained upstairs with P., the percipient, in a few minutes induced him to see a round disc of light on the imaginary lantern-sheet, and then he saw in it "something like a bird," which disappeared immediately. He went on looking (with closed eyes, of course), and presently he thought he saw "something like a bird—something like an eagle." After a pause he said: "I thought I saw a figure there—I saw 5. The bird's gone. I see 5 again; now it's gone. The bird came twice." Mr Smith then came upstairs, and P. had another impression of an eagle. He was told that the eagle was right, and there was something else besides, no hint being given of what the other thing was. He then said that the first thing he saw "was a little bird—a sparrow, perhaps—he could not say—about the size of a sparrow; then that disappeared, and he saw the eagle. He had told Mrs Sidgwick so at the time."

We see the mental machinery at work in another case, where the subject agreed upon was "The Babes in the Wood." To begin with, P. sat with closed eyes, but, when no impression came, Mr Smith opened his eyes, without speaking, and made him look for the picture on a card. After we had waited a little while in vain, Mr Smith said to him: "Do you see something like a straw hat?" P. assented to this, and then began to puzzle out something more: "A white apron, something dark—a child. It can't be another child, unless it's a boy—a boy and a girl—the boy to the right and the girl to the left. Little girl with white socks on and shoes with straps." Mr Smith asked: "What are they doing? Is it two children on a raft at sea?" P.: "No; it's like trees in the background—a copse or something. Like a fairy-story—like babes in a wood or something."

We see it in an even more pronounced degree where the subject sat on a sailing boat. Miss Johnson, who did not know what the subject of the picture was, asked Miss B. whether it was anything like an animal. Miss B. said: "No; got some prong sort of things—something at the bottom like a little boat. What can that be up in the air? Cliffs, I suppose—cliffs in the air high up—it's joining the boat. Oh, sails!—a sailing-boat—not cliffs—sails." This

was not all uttered consecutively, but partly in answer to questions put by Miss Johnson; but, as Miss Johnson was ignorant of the supposed picture, her questions could, of course, give no guidance.

Many experiments have been made in the transference of imaginary scenes, where both operator and subject have attempted to attain a conscious unity of ideas by means of rough drawings. A slight sketch was made, which was then projected to the brain of the percipient, who proceeded to reproduce the unseen, often with amazing fidelity.

In these experiments actual contact was forbidden, to avoid the risk of unconscious indications by pressure. In many cases, however, the agent and percipient have been in the same room, and there has therefore still been some possible risk of unconscious whispering; but this risk has been successfully avoided. It yet remains doubtful how far close proximity really operates in aid of telepathy, or how far its advantage is a mere effect of self-suggestion—on the part either of agent or percipient. Some experimenters—notably the late Mr Kirk and Mr Glardon—have obtained results of just the same type at distances of half-a-mile or more. In the case of induction of hypnotic trance, Dr Gibert, as we have seen, attained at the distance of nearly a mile results which are commonly believed to exact close and actual presence.

Hypnotic agencies, according to Myers, may be simplified into suggestion and self-suggestion. The same author defines suggestion as "successful appeal to the subliminal self." Many striking cases of moral reforms produced by this means have been recorded by Dr Auguste Voisin. For instance:

> "In the summer of 1884 there was at the Salpêtrière a young woman of a deplorable type. Jeanne Sch—— was a criminal lunatic, filthy in habits, violent in demeanour, and with a lifelong history of impurity and theft. M. Voisin, who was one of the physicians on the staff, undertook to hypnotise her on 31st May, at a time when she could only be kept quiet by the strait jacket and *bonnet d'irrigation*, or perpetual cold douche to the head. She would not—indeed, she could not—look steadily at her operator, but raved and spat at him. M. Voisin kept his face close to hers and followed her eyes wherever she moved them. In about ten minutes a stertorous sleep ensued, and in five minutes more she passed into a

sleep-waking state, and began to talk incoherently. The process was repeated on many days, and gradually she became sane when in the trance, though she still raved when awake. Gradually, too, she became able to obey in waking hours commands impressed on her in the trance —first trivial orders (to sweep the room and so forth), then orders involving a marked change of behaviour. Nay, more; in the hypnotic state she voluntarily expressed repentance for her past life, made a confession which involved more evil than the police were cognisant of (though it agreed with facts otherwise known), and finally of her own impulse made good resolves for the future. Two years later (31st July 1886) M. Voisin wrote that she was then a nurse in a Paris hospital, and that her conduct was irreproachable. It appeared then that this poor woman, whose history since the age of thirteen had been one of reckless folly and vice, had become capable of the steady, self-controlled work of a nurse at a hospital, the reformed character having first manifested itself in the hypnotic state, partly in obedience to suggestion, and partly as the natural result of the tranquilisation of morbid passions."

There is a mass of evidence to testify to the marvellous cures that have been effected in this way. Kleptomania, dipsomania, nicotinism, morphinomania, and several varieties of phobies have all been known to yield to hypnotic suggestion. Nor is it always necessary that the mind of the patient should be influenced by another person; self-suggestion is at times equally efficacious. Here is a case in point, taken from "Proceedings," vol. xi. p. 427. The narrator is Dr D. J. Parsons.

"Sixteen years ago I was a little sick; took half-a-grain of opium, and lay down upon the bed. Soon, as I began to feel the tranquillising effect of the opium, I saw three men approaching me; the one in front said: 'You smoke too much tobacco.' I replied: 'I know I do.' He then said: 'Why don't you quit it?' I answered by saying: 'I have been thinking about it, but I am afraid I can't.' He extended his right arm, and placing his forefinger very near my face gave it a few very significant shakes, said, in a very impressive manner: 'You will never want to use tobacco any more as long as you live.' He continued by saying: 'You swear sometimes.' I answered: 'Yes.' He said: 'Will you promise to quit?' I intended to say 'Yes,' but just as I was about to utter the word yes,

instantly a change came over me, and I felt like I had been held under some unknown influence, which was suddenly withdrawn or exhausted. I had been a constant smoker for more than twenty years.

"Since the occurrence of the above incident I have not touched tobacco; have felt ever since like it would poison me, and I now feel like one draw at the pipe would kill me instantly. My desire for tobacco was suddenly and effectually torn out by the roots, but perhaps I shall never know just how it was done.

"D. J. PARSONS, M.D.

"*Sweet Springs, Missouri.*"

It would seem in the above case that the suggestibility was heightened by the use of opium, which at the same time developed a monitory hallucination.

Leading men of science now hold that the popular belief in the dangers of hypnotism is grossly exaggerated, it being far less open to abuse than chloroform. Nevertheless some danger is only too manifest, and Parliament may yet be asked to do what Continental governments have done—viz. to make the practice of hypnotism, save under proper medical supervision, a punishable offence. As an illustration of these dangers I may mention the testimony of an operator given before the Psychical Research Society. Owing to the ready susceptibility of one subject he began to fear that he might acquire an influence which might be inconvenient to both, and so enjoined that he should be unable to hypnotise him unless he previously recited a formula asking the operator to do so. After several failures he states: "I eventually succeeded in impressing this so strongly upon him that it became absolutely effective, and the formula became requisite, for I could not, even with the utmost co-operation on his part, influence him in the least. One night, however, after retiring to bed I was surprised by his entering the room with the request that I should waken him. I expressed astonishment and asked whether he was really asleep. He assured me that he was, and explained that while he had been conversing in the drawing-room after dinner, other persons being present, he had experimentally recited the formula *sotto voce* and had immediately, unperceived by myself or others in the room, gone off in the hypnotic state and could not get out of it again. I protested that this was an extremely unfair trick both on himself and on me, and to guard against its

recurrence I enjoined that in future a mere repetition of the formula should not suffice, but that it should be written down, signed and handed to me. This has hitherto proved completely successful, and in the absence of the document no efforts on the part of either of us has had any effect whatever."

It would seem, however, that the hypnotic subject is by no means entirely at the mercy of the operator. Thus Dr Milne Bramwell, in "Proceedings," vol. xii. pp. 176-203, cites a number of cases in which suggestions had been refused by hypnotic subjects. He also mentions two subjects who had rejected certain suggestions and accepted others. A Miss F., for example, recited a poem, but would not help herself to a glass of water from the sideboard; while a Mr G. would play one part, but not others, and committed an imaginary crime. Dr Bramwell comes to the following conclusion:—

> "The difference between the hypnotised and the normal subject, as it appears to me from a long series of observed facts, is not so much in conduct as in increased mental and physical powers. Any changes in the moral sense, I have noticed, have invariably been for the better, the hypnotised subject evincing superior refinement. As regards obedience to suggestion, there is apparently little to choose between the two. A hypnotised subject, who has acquired the power of manifesting various physical and mental phenomena, will do so, in response to suggestion, for much the same reasons as one in the normal condition.... When the act demanded is contrary to the moral sense, it is usually refused by the normal subject, and invariably by the hypnotised one."

The hypnotic state evinces an extraordinary extension of faculty. Dr Bramwell's remarkable series of experiments on "time appreciation" shows that orders were carried out by the subject at expiration of such periods as 20,290 minutes from the beginning of the order. In her normal state the female subject of this experiment was incapable of correctly calculating how many days and hours 20,290 minutes would make, and even in her hypnotised condition could reckon only with errors; yet, what is singular to relate, even when a blunder was made in the former calculation the order of the hypnotist was none the less fulfilled when the correct period expired. The conclusion is not easy to avoid: that beneath the stratum of human consciousness brought to the surface by hypnotism there is one—perhaps two —"subliminal" strata more alert and more capable than our ordinary

workaday ego.

What light this theory of a "subliminal" self will shed on our subject we will see when we come to discuss clairvoyance and the trance utterances of the spiritualistic "medium."

CHAPTER III

PHANTASMS OF THE LIVING

We have seen that the hypnotic agent is able to project from his own brain certain thoughts and images into the mind of the percipient. "When," writes Professor Barrett, "the subject was in the state of trance or profound hypnotism, I noticed that not only sensations, but also ideas or emotions, occurring in the operator appeared to be reproduced in the subject without the intervention of any sign, or visible or audible communication.... In many other ways I convinced myself that the existence of a distinct idea in my own mind gave rise to some image of the idea in the subject's mind, not always a clear image, but one that could not fail to be recognised as a more or less distorted reflection of my own thought. The important point is that every care was taken to prevent any unconscious muscular action of the face, or otherwise giving any indication to the subject."

This presumed mode of communication between one individual and another, without the intervention of any known sense, Professor Barrett, arguing on electrical analogies, is inclined to suggest might be due to some form of nervous induction. But is this faculty restricted in its operation to a hypnotised subject? If it were, the significance of the phenomena would be very much lessened. We should leave telepathy out of our account. But it is not so restricted. The ideas and images are capable of being projected not only to a hypnotised person, but to one who is apparently not under any hypnotic influence whatever. Yet we still must be careful of how we call in the aid of any "supernatural" agency to account for the influences I am about to relate—the translation of ideas and motor impulses from one person to another without the aid of any known sense. The transference of pictures which we described in the last article has been achieved in hundreds of cases by an agent upon a hypnotised percipient. Here we have telepathy apparently at work, but not, however, at any great distance, nor successful in conjuring up really vivid or ominous hallucinations. The scientific term for these is "sensory automatisms," and many instances of these are given by Edmund Gurney, author of "Phantasms of the Living."

At an early period the Society for Psychical Research began a "Census of Hallucinations," which, with Gurney's book, now renders it possible for us to consider these phenomena with some certainty. The net result of all this investigation would seem to demonstrate that a large number of sensory automatisms occur amongst sane and healthy persons. We will later consider what difficulty lies in the way of attributing to telepathy the bulk of these phenomena. There is a widely accepted theory that telepathy is propagated by brain-waves, or, in Sir W. Crooke's phraseology, by ether-waves, of even smaller amplitude and greater frequency than those which carry X-rays. Such waves are supposed to pass from one brain to another, arousing in the second brain an excitation of image similar to the excitation or image from which they start in the first place. It has been pointed out that on this view there is no theoretical reason for limiting telepathy to human beings. Why may not the impulse pass between men and the lower animals, or between the lower animals themselves?

I myself have exhumed from the records a case in point. General J. C. Thompson describes a remarkable apparition of a dog, with every mark of reality, at the time when the dog was killed in a city more than a hundred miles distant. General Thompson says:

> "Jim, the dog whose ghost I refer to, was a beautiful collie, the pet of my family, residing at Cheyenne, Wyoming. His affectionate nature surpassed even that of his kind. He had a wide celebrity in the city as 'the laughing dog,' due to the fact that he manifested his recognition of acquaintances and love for his friends by a joyful laugh, as distinctively such as that of any human being.
>
> "One evening in the fall of 1905, about 7.30 P.M., I was walking with a friend on Seventeenth Street in Denver, Colorado. As we approached the entrance to the First National Bank, we observed a dog lying in the middle of the pavement, and on coming up to him I was amazed at his perfect likeness to Jim in Cheyenne. The identity was greatly fortified by his loving recognition of me, and the peculiar laugh of Jim's accompanying it. I said to my friend that nothing but the 105 miles between Denver and Cheyenne would keep me from making oath to the dog being Jim, whose peculiarities I explained to him.

> "The dog astral or ghost was apparently badly hurt—he could not rise. After petting him and giving him a kind adieu, we crossed over Stout Street and stopped to look at him again. He had vanished. The next morning's mail brought a letter from my wife saying that Jim had been accidentally killed the evening before at 7.30 P.M. I shall always believe it was Jim's ghost I saw."

This story, circumstantially narrated by an American general, recalls Mr Rider Haggard's celebrated dream that he saw his dog, Bob, in a dying condition, probably about three hours after the dog's death.

But we need not pause on such bypaths as these.

Perhaps the simplest form of thought-transference at a distance is that in which we find a vague mental unrest, unaccompanied by any visual or auditory hallucination. Cases are not infrequently met with where the patient suffers from acute depression and anxiety which are not connected at the time with any definite event. *The Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, July, 1895, yields the following.

Miss W. writes:

> "On January 17th of this year (1895) I was haunted all day with an indefinable dread, amounting to positive terror if I yielded in the least to its influence. A little before six o'clock I went to my maid's room and casually inquired of her whether she believed in presentiments. She answered: 'Don't let them get hold of you; it is a bad habit.' I replied: 'This is no ordinary presentiment. All day long I have felt that something terrible is impending; of what nature I do not know. I have fought against it, but to no purpose. It is a terror I am positively *possessed* with.' I was proceeding to describe it in fuller detail, when my mother entered the room with a telegram in her hand. One glance at her face told me that my foreboding had not been a groundless depression. The telegram was to the effect that my brother had been taken very ill at Cambridge and needed my mother at once to nurse him.
>
> "I presume that the intensity of my foreboding was due to the very serious nature of his illness.

> "I experienced at different times what are in common parlance termed 'presentiments'; but only on one other occasion has the same peculiar *terror* (a chilling conviction of impending trouble) beset me."

This is corroborated both by the maid and Miss W.'s brother, an undergraduate at King's College, Cambridge, who had met with a serious accident the same afternoon. The affection between brother and sister was, it is related, very close.

Of a well-known type of case the following is a good example. The Hon. Mrs Fox Powys is the narrator:—

> "July 1882.
>
> "I was expecting my husband home, and shortly after the time he ought to have arrived (about ten P.M.) I heard a cab drive up to the door, the bell ring, my husband's voice talking with the cabman, the front door open and his step come up the stairs. I went to the drawing-room, opened it, and to my astonishment saw no one. I could hardly believe he was not there, the whole thing was so vivid, and the street was particularly quiet at the time. About twenty minutes or so after this my husband *really* arrived, though nothing sounded to me more real than it did the first time. The train was late, and he had been thinking I might be anxious."

In response to further inquiries, Mrs Powys added:

> "To me the whole thing was very noisy and real, but no one else can have heard anything, for the bell I heard ring was not answered. It was a quiet street in town, and there was no vehicle of any kind passing at the time; and on finding no one on the landing as I expected, I went at once to the window, and there was nothing to be seen, and no sound to be heard, which would have been the case had the cab been driven off."

Here the expectation of Mr Fox Powys' arrival seems to have caused an auditory hallucination. In other cases of a similar nature the hallucination is visual, the percipient actually seeing the figure of the expected person.

The authors of "Phantasms of the Living" give the following case as an

"interesting puzzle" and invite the reader to decide whether or not it affords evidence for telepathy. The narrator, Mr W. A. S., is described as an unexceptionable witness who has never had any other visual hallucination.

"January 14th, 1883.

"In the month of April 1871, about two o'clock in the afternoon, I was sitting in the drawing-room of my father's house in Pall Mall. The window of the room fronted south; and the sun was shining brightly in at the window. I was sitting between the fireplace and the window, with my back to the light; my niece was sitting on the opposite side of the fireplace; and opposite me at the farther corner of the room was a door partly open, leading directly to the staircase. I saw what I supposed at the first moment to be dirty soapy water running in at the door; and I was in the act of jumping up to scold the housemaid for upsetting the water, when I saw that the supposed water was the tail or train of a lady's dress. The lady glided in backwards, as if she had been slid in on a slide, each part of her dress keeping its place without disturbance. She glided in till I could see the whole of her, *except the tip of her nose, her lips and the tip of her chin, which were hidden by the edge of the door*. Her head was slightly turned over her shoulder, and her eye also turned, so that it appeared fixed upon me. She held her arm, which was a very fine one, in a peculiar way, as if she were proud of it. She was dressed in a pale blue evening dress, worked with white lace. I instantly recognised the figure as that of a lady whom I had known some twenty-five years or more before; and with whom I had frequently danced. She was a bright, dashing girl, a good dancer, and we were good friends, but nothing more. She had afterwards married and I had occasionally heard of her, but do not think I had seen her for certainly more than twenty or twenty-five years. She looked much as I used to see her—with long curls and bright eyes, but perhaps something stouter and more matronly.

"I said to myself: 'This is one of those strange apparitions I have often heard of. I will watch it as carefully as I can.' My niece, who did not see the figure, in the course of a minute or two exclaimed: 'Uncle A., what is the matter with you? You look as if you saw a ghost!' I motioned her to be quiet, as I wished to observe the thing carefully; and an impression came upon me that if I moved, the thing would disappear. I tried to find

out whether there was anything in the ornaments on the walls, or anything else which could suggest the figure; but I found that all the lines close to her cut the outline of her figure at all sorts of angles, and none of these coincided with the outline of her figure, and the colour of everything around her strongly contrasted with her colour. In the course of a few minutes, I heard the door bell ring, and I heard my brother's voice in the hall. He came upstairs and walked right through the figure into the room. The figure then began to fade away rather quickly; and though I tried I could in no way recall it.

"I frequently told the story in society, treating it always as something internal rather than external and supposing that the lady was still alive; and rather making a joke of it than otherwise. Some years afterwards I was staying with some friends in Suffolk and told the story at the dinner-table, saying that it was no ghost as the lady was still alive. The lady of the house said: 'She is not alive, as you suppose, but she has been dead some years.' We looked at the peerage and found she had died in 1871. (I afterwards found out that she had died in November, whereas the apparition was in April.) The conversation continued about her, and I said: 'Poor thing, I am sorry she is dead. I have had many a merry dance with her. What did she die of?' The lady of the house said: 'Poor thing indeed, she died a wretched death; she died of cancer in the face.' She never showed me the front of her face; it was always concealed by the edge of the door."

I will now concern myself with the power of an agent to project himself phantasmally—that is, to make his form and features manifest to some percipient at a distance as though he were actually present. In Gurney's "Phantasms of the Living" is given at length a case of a simple nature. Here there was not one but two percipients.

On a certain Sunday evening in November 1881, having been reading of the great power which the human will is capable of exercising, I determined with the whole force of my being that I would be present in spirit in the front bedroom on the second floor of a house situated at 22 Hogarth Road, Kensington, in which room slept two ladies of my acquaintance—viz. Miss L. S. V., and Miss E. C. V., aged respectively twenty-five and eleven years. I was living at this time at 23 Kildare

Gardens, a distance of about three miles from Hogarth Road, and I had not mentioned in any way my intention of trying this experiment to either of the above ladies, for the simple reason that it was only on retiring to rest upon this Sunday night that I made up my mind to do so. The time at which I determined I would be there was one o'clock in the morning, and I also had a strong intention of making my presence perceptible.

"On the following Thursday I went to see the ladies in question, and in the course of conversation (without any allusion to the subject on my part) the elder one told me that on the previous Sunday night she had been much terrified by perceiving me standing by her bedside, and that she screamed when the apparition advanced towards her, and awoke her little sister, who saw me also.

"I asked her if she was awake at the time, and she replied most decidedly in the affirmative, and upon my inquiring the time of the occurrence she replied about one o'clock in the morning.

"This lady, at my request, wrote down a statement of the event and signed it.

"This was the first occasion upon which I tried an experiment of this kind, and its complete success startled me very much.

"Besides exercising my power of volition very strongly, I put forth an effort which I cannot find words to describe. I was conscious of a mysterious influence of some sort permeating in my body, and had a distinct impression that I was exercising some force with which I had been hitherto unacquainted, but which I can now at certain times set in motion at will.

"S. H. B."

The account given by Miss Verity is as follows:—

"January 18th, 1883.

"On a certain Sunday evening, about twelve months since, at our house in Hogarth Road, Kensington, I distinctly saw Mr B. in my room, about

one o'clock. I was perfectly awake and was much terrified. I awoke my sister by screaming, and she saw the apparition herself. Three days after, when I saw Mr B., I told him what had happened; but it was some time before I could recover from the shock I had received, and the remembrance is too vivid to be ever erased from my memory.

"L. S. Verity."

Miss E. C. Verity says:

"I remember the occurrence of the event described by my sister in the annexed paragraph, and her description is quite correct. I saw the apparition which she saw, at the same time and under the same circumstances.

"E. C. Verity."

"The witnesses (comments Gurney) have been very carefully cross-examined by the present writer. There is not the slightest doubt that their mention of the occurrence to S. H. B. was spontaneous. They had not at first intended to mention it; but when they saw him their sense of its oddness overcame their resolution. Miss Verity is a perfectly sober-minded and sensible witness, with no love of marvels, and with a considerable dread and dislike of this particular form of marvel."

On another occasion the agent announced privately to the investigator that he would project himself at a stated time. He did so; and the lady wrote as follows:—

"44 Norland Square, W.

"On Saturday night, March 22nd, 1884, at about midnight, I had a distinct impression that Mr S. H. B. was present in my room, and I distinctly saw him whilst I was quite widely awake. He came towards me, and stroked my hair. I *voluntarily* gave him this information when he called to see me on Wednesday, April 2nd, telling him the time and

the circumstances of the apparition, without any suggestion on his part. The appearance in my room was most vivid and quite unmistakable.

"L. S. Verity."

Mr B.'s own account runs thus:

"On Saturday, March 22nd, I determined to make my presence perceptible to Miss V., at 44 Norland Square, Notting Hill, at twelve midnight, and as I had previously arranged with Mr Gurney that I should post him a letter on the evening on which I tried my next experiment (stating the time and other particulars), I sent a note to acquaint him with the above facts.

"About ten days afterwards I called upon Miss V., and she voluntarily told me that on March 22nd, at twelve o'clock midnight, she had seen me so vividly in her room (whilst widely awake) that her nerves had been much shaken, and she had been obliged to send for a doctor in the morning.

"S. H. B."

Another case of a similar nature is reported by the American branch of the Society for Psychical Research:

"On July 5th, 1887, I left my house in Lakewood to go to New York to spend a few days. My wife was not feeling well when I left, and after I had started I looked back and saw her standing in the door looking disconsolate and sad at my leaving. The picture haunted me all day, and at night, before I went to bed, I thought I would try to find out, if possible, her condition. I had undressed, and was sitting on the edge of the bed, when I covered my face with my hands and willed myself in Lakewood at home to see if I could see her. After a little while I seemed to be standing in her room before the bed, and saw her lying there looking much better. I felt satisfied she was better, and so spent the week more comfortably regarding her condition. On Saturday I went home. When she saw me she remarked: 'I don't know whether I am glad to see you or not, for I thought something had happened to you. I saw you standing in front of the bed the night (about 8.30 or before 9) you

left, and as plain as could be, and I have been worrying myself about you ever since. I sent to the office and to the depôt daily to get some message from you.' After explaining my effort to find out her condition, everything became plain to her. She had seen me when I was trying to see her and find out her condition. I thought at the time I was going to see her and make her see me.

"B. F. Sinclair."

The foregoing is corroborated by Mrs Sinclair. She states that she saw her husband, not as he was dressed at the moment of the experiment, but "in a suit that hung in a closet at home." The apparition caused her great anxiety, so that her husband's view of her improved appearance was not really true. The son, Mr George Sinclair, avers that in his mother's vision his father's face was "drawn and set, as if he was either dead or trying to accomplish something which was beyond him."

Another case investigated by the Society is also striking. The date is 1896.

"'One night, two or three years ago, I came back from the theatre to my mother's flat at 6 S—— Street; and after I had been into her bedroom and told her all about it, I went to bed about one A.M. I had not been asleep long when I started up frightened, fancying that I had heard someone walk down the passage towards my mother's room; but, hearing nothing more, went to sleep again. I started up alarmed in the same way three or four times before dawn.

"'In the morning, upon inquiry, my mother (who was ill at the time) only told me that she had had a very disturbed night.

"'Then I asked my brother, who told me that he had suffered in the same way as I had, starting up several times in a frightened manner. On hearing this my mother then told me that she had seen an apparition of Mr Pelham. Later in the day Mr Pelham came in, and my mother asked him casually if he had been doing anything last night; upon which he told us that he had come to bed willing that he should visit and appear to us. We made him promise not to repeat the experiment.'

"Mrs E., the mother, states that she was recovering from influenza at the

time. At half-past ten, as she lay reading:

"'A strange, creepy sensation came over me, and I felt my eyes were drawn towards the left-hand side of the room. I felt I must look, and there, distinct against the curtain, was a blue luminous mist.

"'This time I was impelled to cast my eyes downward to the side of my bed, and there, creeping upwards towards me, was the same blue luminous mist. I was too terrified to move, and remember keeping the book straight up before my face, as though to ward off a blow, at the same time exerting all my strength of will and determination not to be afraid—when, suddenly, as if with a jerk, above the top of my book came the brow and eyes of Mr Pelham.'

"Instantly her fears ceased. She 'remembered that Mr Pelham had experimented on her before at night'; and 'in one moment mist and face were gone.'

"For his part, Mr Pelham explains that he 'carefully imagined' himself going down the steps of his house, and so along the streets, to Mrs E.'s flat, and to her drawing-room and bedroom; he then went to bed with his mind fixed on the visit and soon fell asleep. He has made other trials, but without any positive success, though during one of them Mrs E. was wakened suddenly by the feeling that someone was in the room, and it occurred to her that Mr Pelham was again experimenting."

The occurrences above related are most significant, if true, and I am bound to say the *bona fides* of the narrators seems to me indisputable. Is it a spirit showing itself partially dissociated from the living organism; evincing independence, a certain intelligence and a certain permanence? Or is this a mere image of the agent, conceived in his own brain and projected telepathically to the brain of the percipient? So far, we are merely groping our way. Yet, is it not possible that we have laid hands upon a credible explanation of the eternal mystery of "ghosts"? We shall see.

CHAPTER IV

DREAMS

Having partially discussed the subject of phantasms projected from the brain of the agent to that of the percipient, I must now briefly describe another group for which the evidence is very abundant—that of "veridical" dreams. This is a term used to describe apparitions coinciding with other events in such a manner as to suggest a connection. Your dream or hallucination is said to be veridical when it conveys an idea which is both true and previously unknown to you.

Making every allowance for the element of chance, there is a mass of evidence which mere coincidence cannot explain away. Yet we must not overlook the frequency of dreams, even of a striking character, which may once or twice in a million times actually hit on the coincident event. But besides coincidence, there is at times another normal explanation. Mr Podmore relates how a neighbour of his on the night of 24th June 1894 dreamed President Carnot had been assassinated. He told his family before the morning paper announcing the news had been opened. As has been pointed out, in a case of that kind it seems possible that the information may have reached the sleeper in his dreams from the shouts of a newsboy, or even from the conversation of passers-by in the street.

Before any supernormal theory, we must admit the possibility of a normal communication, however far-fetched it may seem. In each of the instances about to be related the fact of the dream was either recorded by the dreamer or related to a friend before the fact of any coincidence was suspected.

One of the best-known cases is that of Canon Warburton, who writes:

> "Somewhere about the year 1848 I went up from Oxford to spend a day or two with my brother, Acton Warburton, then a barrister, living at 10 Fish Street, Lincoln's Inn. When I got to his chambers I found a note on the table apologising for his absence, and saying that he had gone to a

dance somewhere in the West End, and intended to be home soon after one o'clock. Instead of going to bed I dozed in an arm-chair, but started up wide awake exactly at one, ejaculating: 'By Jove! he's down!' and seeing him coming out of a drawing-room into a brightly illuminated landing, catching his foot in the edge of the top stair, and falling headlong, just saving himself by his elbows and hands. (The house was one which I have never seen, nor did I know where it was.) Thinking very little of the matter, I fell a-doze again for half-an-hour and was awakened by my brother suddenly coming in and saying, 'Oh, there you are! I have just had as narrow an escape of breaking my neck as I ever had in my life. Coming out of the ballroom I caught my foot, and tumbled full-length down the stairs.'

"That is all. It may have been 'only a dream,' but I always thought it must have been something more."

A member of the Society for Psychical Research narrates that on 7th October 1900 he woke abruptly in the small hours of the morning with a painful conviction upon him that his wife, who was that night sleeping in another part of the house, had burst a varicose vein in the calf of her leg, and that he could feel the swelled place three inches long:

"I wondered whether I ought to get up and go down to her room on the first floor, and considered whether she would be able to come up to me; but I was only partly awake, though in acute distress. My mind had been suddenly roused, but my body was still under the lethargy of sleep. I argued with myself that there was sure to be nothing in it, that I should only disturb her, and so shortly went off to sleep again.

"On going to her room this morning I said I had had a horrid dream, which had woke me up, to the effect that she had burst a varicose vein, of which just now care has to be taken. 'Why,' she replied, 'I had just the same experience. I woke up at 2.15, feeling sure the calf of my leg was bleeding, and my hand seemed to feel it when I put it there. I turned on the light in alarm, noticing the time, and wondered if I should be able to get up to thee, or whether I should have to wake the housekeeper. Thou wast in the dream out of which I woke, examining the place.'

"Though I did not note the hour, two o'clock is about the time I should have guessed it to be; and the impression on my mind was vivid and terrible, knowing how dangerous such an accident would be."

The foregoing is thus corroborated by the lady:

"I felt twinges of pain in my leg off and on in my sleep without being entirely roused till about 2.15 A.M. Then, or just before, I dreamt or had a vivid impression that a vein had burst, and that my husband, who was sleeping in another room up another flight of stairs, was there and called my attention to it. I thought it felt wet, and trickling down the leg as if bleeding, passed my hand down, and at first thought it seemed wet; but on gaining fuller consciousness found it all right, and that it was not more painful than often when I got out and stood on it. Thought over the contingency of its actually bursting, and whether I could so bandage it in that case as to make it safe to go up to my husband's room, and thought I could do so.

"Looking at my watch, found it about 2.20."

As to dreams in which a death occurs there is a vast mass of testimony. The late Dr Hodgson, on 19th July 1897, received the following letter:—

"DEAR HODGSON,—Five minutes ago Mr J. F. Morse, who has all his life had dreams which were more or less verified later, came to my room and said: 'I believe my wife died last night, for I had a dream of a most remarkable nature which indicates it. I shall be able to let you know soon, for I shall get word at my office when I reach there. I will then send you word.' His wife is in a country place in Delaware Co. Pa. She is ill, but he had no idea she would not live for months, as the enclosed letter of July 15th will show; but she was ill, and would be likely to decline slowly and gradually. I will get this off or in the mail before I hear any more.

"Mr Morse in his appearance looks like one who had just lost a dear friend, and is in a state of great mental depression, with tears in his eyes....

"M. L. HOLBROOK."

On the evening of the same day a telegram was received announcing the unexpected death of Mrs Morse at 9.15 on the evening of Friday, 16th July.

A prominent Chicago journalist, Mr F. B. Wilkie, reported that his wife asked him one morning in October 1885, while still engaged in dressing, and before either of them had left their sleeping-room, if he knew anyone named Edsale or Esdale. A negative reply was given and then a "Why do you ask?" She replied: "During the night I dreamt that I was on the lake-shore and found a coffin there, with the name of Edsale or Esdale on it, and I am confident that someone of that name has recently been drowned there." On opening the morning paper the first item that attracted his attention was the report of the mysterious disappearance from his home in Hyde Park of a young man named Esdale. A few days afterwards the body of a young man was found on the lake-shore.

This case was carefully investigated and authenticated by Dr Hodgson, and bears some unusual features.

Of dreams that may be reasonably regarded as telepathic the following is a striking example. It is contributed to "Phantasms of the Living" by a Mrs Hilton—a lady engaged in active work, and not in any respect a "visionary."

> "234 Burdett Road, E.
>
> "April 10th, 1883.
>
> "The dream which I am about to relate occurred about two years ago. I seemed to be walking in a country road, with high grassy banks on either side. Suddenly I heard the tramp of many feet. Feeling a strange sense of fear I called out: 'Who are these people coming?' A voice above me replied: 'A procession of the dead.' I then found myself on the bank, looking into the road where the people were walking five or six abreast. Hundreds of them passed by me—neither looking aside nor looking at each other. They were people of all conditions and in all ranks of life. I saw no children amongst them. I watched the long line of people go away into the far distance, but I felt no special interest in any of them, until I saw a middle-aged Friend, dressed as a gentleman farmer. I pointed to him and called out: 'Who is that, please?' He turned round and called out in a loud voice: 'I am John M., of Chelmsford.' Then my

dream ended. Next day when my husband returned from the office he told me that John M., of Chelmsford, had died the previous day.

"I may add that I only knew the Friend in question by sight and cannot recollect ever speaking to him.

"MARIE HILTON."

About a year later Mrs Hilton experienced a dream of a similar kind, again coincident with the death of an acquaintance seen in the phantom procession. It is worth noting "remarks Mr Gurney," that these dreams—for all their *bizarrerie*—seem to belong to a known type.

In another category of phenomena belong precognitive dreams in which certain events, especially deaths, are foretold. Mr Alfred Cooper, of 9 Henrietta Street, Cavendish Square, W., states, and his statement is attested by the Duchess of Hamilton, that:

"A fortnight before the death of the late Earl of L——, in 1882, I called upon the Duke of Hamilton in Hill Street to see him professionally. After I had finished seeing him we went into the drawing-room where the Duchess was, and the Duke said to me: 'Oh, Cooper, how is the Earl?'

"The Duchess said: 'What Earl?' and on my answering: 'Lord L——,' she replied, 'That is very odd. I have had a most extraordinary vision. I went to bed, but after being in bed a short time, I was not exactly asleep, but thought I saw a scene as if from a play before me. The actors in it were Lord L——, in a chair, as if in a fit, with a man standing over him with a red beard. He was by the side of a bath, over which bath a red lamp was distinctly shown.'

"I then said: 'I am attending Lord L—— at present; there is very little the matter with him; he is not going to die; he will be all right very soon.'

"Well, he got better for a week and was nearly well, but at the end of six or seven days after this I was called to see him suddenly. He had inflammation of both lungs.

"I called in Sir William Jenner, but in six days he was a dead man. There were two male nurses attending him; one had been taken ill. But when I saw the other the dream of the Duchess was exactly represented. He was standing near a bath over the Earl, and, strange to say, his beard was red. There was the bath with the red lamp over it, it is rather rare to find a bath with a red lamp over it, and this brought the story to my mind.

"The vision seen by the Duchess was told two weeks before the death of Lord L——. It is a most remarkable thing. This account, written in 1888, has been revised by the late Duke of Manchester, father of the Duchess of Hamilton, who heard the vision from his daughter on the morning after she had seen it.

"MARY HAMILTON.

"ALFRED COOPER."

Mr Myers adds:

"The Duchess only knew Lord L—— by sight, and had not heard that he was ill. She knew she was not asleep, for she opened her eyes to get rid of the vision, and, shutting them, saw the same thing again.

"An independent and concordant account has been given to me (F. W. H. M.) orally by a gentleman to whom the Duchess related the dream on the morning after its occurrence."

One of the most interesting and well-authenticated cases of dreams foretelling a death is that of Mr Fred Lane, understudy to that popular actor the late William Terriss. His statement is as follows:—

"Adelphi Theatre,

"December 20th, 1897.

"In the early morning of December 16th, 1897, I dreamt that I saw the late Mr Terriss lying in a state of delirium or unconsciousness on the stairs leading to the dressing-rooms in the Adelphi Theatre. He was surrounded by people engaged at the theatre, amongst whom were Miss Millward and one of the footmen who attend the curtain, both of whom I

> actually saw a few hours later at the death scene. His chest was bare and clothes torn aside. Everybody who was around him was trying to do something for his good. This dream was in the shape of a picture. I saw it like a tableau on which the curtain would rise and fall. I immediately after dreamt that we did not open at the Adelphi Theatre that evening. I was in my dressing-room in the dream, but this latter part was somewhat incoherent. The next morning, on going down to the theatre for rehearsal, the first member of the company I met was Miss H——, to whom I mentioned this dream. On arriving at the theatre I also mentioned it to several other members of the company including Messrs Creagh Henry, Buxton, Carter Bligh, etc. This dream, though it made such an impression upon me as to cause me to relate it to my fellow-artists, did not give me the idea of any coming disaster. I may state that I have dreamt formerly of deaths of relatives and other matters which have impressed me, but the dreams have never impressed me sufficiently to make me repeat them the following morning, and have never been verified. My dream of the present occasion was the most vivid I have ever experienced; in fact, lifelike, and exactly represented the scene as I saw it at night."

Three members of the company—Mr Carter Bligh, Mr Creagh Henry, and Miss H—— —made statements that Mr Lane related his dream in their presence on the morning of 16th December. Mr Lane was in the vicinity of the Adelphi Theatre when the murderer, named Prince or Archer, who had been employed as a super at the theatre, stabbed Terriss at the stage entrance to the theatre. The actor was taken to the Charing Cross Hospital, where he died almost immediately. It is interesting to note that it was Lane himself who ran to the hospital for the doctor, and on his return looked in at the stage entrance and saw Terriss lying on the stairs just as he had seen him in the dream.

While I am fully alive to the possibilities of coincidence, there certainly does not seem to be much besides levity in the theory that "it happened to be Jones's hour to see a hallucination of Thompson when it happened to be Thompson's hour to die," especially when, as frequently happens, the hallucination occurs more than once to the same percipient.

A Parisian journalist, M. Henri Buisson, sends to "The Annals of Psychical

Science" an account of three premonitory dreams all of which were told to others before they were fulfilled. In the first, which occurred on June 8th, 1887, M. Buisson saw his grandmother "stretched dead on her bed, with a smile on her face as if she slept." Above the bed, in a brilliant sun, he read the date, "June 8th, 1888," just a year later; and on that day his grandmother died quite suddenly, with her face as calm as he had seen it in his dream.

On another occasion M. Buisson saw his mother, not dead, but very ill, and attended by a doctor, who had died more than a year before, after having been the family physician for thirty years. The next day M. Buisson received a telegram saying that his mother was ill, and, in fact, she died during the day.

In April 1907, M. Buisson dreamt that he received notice to quit his house on pretence of a message from the Prefect of Police, and that on looking out of the window he saw the Prefect in the street, dressed in a leather jacket, with a soft hat, and a slipper on one foot. He also dreamt that a fire had broken out. On the evening of the next day he heard the fire-engines, and on following them he found the Prefect on the spot, dressed just as in the dream, having hurt one foot, he had to go about in a slipper.

Of still another type is the clairvoyant dream. The following is related by Mr Herbert J. Lewis, of Cardiff:—

> "In September 1880 I lost the landing-order of a large steamer containing a cargo of iron ore, which had arrived in the port of Cardiff. She had to commence discharging at six o'clock the next morning. I received the landing-order at four o'clock in the afternoon, and when I arrived at the office at six I found that I had lost it. During all the evening I was doing my utmost to find the officials of the Customs House to get a permit, as the loss was of the greatest importance, preventing the ship from discharging. I came home in a great degree of trouble about the matter, as I feared that I should lose my situation in consequence.
>
> "That night I dreamt that I saw the lost landing-order lying in a crack in the wall under a desk in the Long Room of the Customs House.
>
> "At five the next morning I went down to the Customs House and got

the keeper to get up and open it. I went to the spot of which I had dreamt, and found the paper in the very place. The ship was not ready to discharge at her proper time, and I went on board at seven and delivered the landing-order, saving her from all delay.

"I can certify to the truth of the above statement,

"HERBERT J. LEWIS,

"THOMAS LEWIS

"(Herbert Lewis's father).

"H. WALLIS."

(Mr E. J. Newell, of the George and Abbotsford Hotel, Melrose, adds the following corroborative note.)

"August 14th, 1884.

"I made some inquiries about Mr Herbert Lewis's dream before I left Cardiff. He had been searching throughout the room in which the order was found. His theory as to how the order got in the place in which it was found is that it was probably put there by someone (perhaps with malicious intent), as he does not see how it could have fallen so.

"The fact that Mr H. Lewis is exceedingly short-sighted adds to the probability of the thing which you suggest, that the dream was simply an unconscious act of memory in sleep. On the other hand, he does not believe it was there when he searched.

"E. J. NEWELL."

Now, it seems to me in the above case that the dreamer's subliminal self may have taken note of the lost landing-order without his super-consciousness being aware of it, and that the fact returned to him in his dream.

In R. L. Stevenson's "Across the Plains" may be found a striking chapter on dreams. It contains an account of some of the most successful dream experiments ever recorded. Stevenson's dreams were of no ordinary character; they were always of great vividness, and often of a markedly

recurrent type. This faculty he developed to an unusual degree—to such an extent, indeed, that it became of great assistance to him in his work. By self-suggestion before sleep, we are told, the great novelist would secure "a visual and dramatic intensity of dream-representation which furnished him with the motives of some of his most striking romances." But "R. L. S." is not the only one who has secured assistance of dreams. Here is an account given by a German, Professor Hilprecht, of an experience of a similar nature ("Human Personality," i. 376):

> "One Saturday evening, about the middle of March 1893, I had been wearying myself, as I had done so often in the weeks preceding, in the vain attempt to decipher two small fragments of agate, which were supposed to belong to the finger-rings of some Babylonian. The labour was much increased by the fact that the fragments presented remnants only of characters and lines, that dozens of similar small fragments had been found in the ruins of the temple of Bel at Nippur with which nothing could be done, that in this case furthermore I never had the originals before me, but only a hasty sketch made by one of the members of the expedition sent by the University of Pennsylvania to Babylonia. I could not say more than that the fragments, taking into consideration the place in which they were found and the peculiar characteristics of the cuneiform characters preserved upon them, sprang from the Cassite period of Babylonian history (*circa* 1700-1140 B.C.); moreover, as the first character of the third line of the first fragment seemed to be KU, I ascribed this fragment, with an interrogation point, to King Kurigalzu, while I placed the other fragment as unclassifiable with other Cassite fragments upon a page of my book where I published the unclassifiable fragments. The proofs already lay before me, but I was far from satisfied. The whole problem passed yet again through my mind that March evening before I placed my mark of approval under the last correction in the book. Even then I had come to no conclusion. About midnight, weary and exhausted, I went to bed and was soon in deep sleep. Then I dreamed the following remarkable dream. A tall, thin priest of the old pre-Christian Nippur, about forty years of age and clad in a simple abba, led me to the treasure chamber of the temple, on its south-east side. He went with me into a small low-ceiled room, without windows, in which there was a large wooden chest, while scraps of

agate and lapis-lazuli lay scattered on the floor. Here he addressed me as follows:—'The two fragments which you have published separately upon pages 22 and 26, belong together, are not finger-rings, and their history is as follows. King Kurigalzu (*circa* 1300 B.C.) once sent to the temple of Bel, among other articles of agate and lapis-lazuli, an inscribed votive cylinder of agate. Then we priests suddenly received the command to make for the statue of the god Ninib a pair of earrings of agate. We were in great dismay, since there was no agate as raw material at hand. In order to execute the command there was nothing for us to do but cut the votive cylinder into three parts, thus making three rings, each of which contained a portion of the original inscription. The first two rings served as earrings for the statue of the god; the two fragments which have given you so much trouble are portions of them. If you will put the two together you will have confirmation of my words. But the third ring you have not yet found in the course of your excavations and you never will find it.' With this the priest disappeared. I awoke at once and immediately told my wife the dream, that I might not forget it. Next morning—Sunday—I examined the fragments once more in the light of these disclosures, and to my astonishment found all the details of the dream precisely verified in so far as the means of verification were in my hands. The original inscription on the votive cylinder read: 'To the god Ninib, son of Bel, his lord, has Kurigalzu, pontifex of Bel, presented this.' The problem was at last solved."

CHAPTER V

HALLUCINATIONS

From the occurrence in a dream of the ideas of events which happen to coincide with actual events, let us turn to apparitions occurring during the waking hours of the percipient.

The late Professor Sidgwick, at the head of a committee, sent out the following question to 17,000 educated persons not known to have had hallucinations:—"Have you ever, when believing yourself to be completely awake, had a vivid impression of seeing or being touched by a living being or inanimate object, or of hearing a voice, which impression, so far as you could discover, was not due to any external physical cause?"

The replies demonstrate how frequent are hallucinations amongst healthy, normal-minded persons. No fewer than 1684, or one in ten, of the persons interrogated, had had visual and auditory and even tactile hallucinations, realistic human phantoms, and other apparitions. We find that, according to the age classification, of 1295 visual hallucinations 72 occurred while the percipients were under ten years of age, 217 between the ages of ten and nineteen, 300 between twenty and twenty-nine, 143 between thirty and thirty-nine, 81 between forty and forty-nine, 40 between fifty and fifty-nine, 22 between sixty and sixty-nine, 5 later than seventy, and 415 at unstated ages. Some of the hallucinations occurred immediately after waking, others while the percipients were awake in bed; but the great bulk occurred in a fully awakened state, and a large number appeared out of doors.

Of hallucinations of which we may say that they are due to a projection from the agent's mind, commonly to a dying man or woman, to that of the percipient, perhaps one of the most famous is that of Lord Charles Beresford, as described by him to the Society for Psychical Research:

> "It was in the spring of 1864, whilst on board H.M.S. *Racoon*, between Gibraltar and Marseilles, that I went into my office on the main deck to

get a pipe; and as I opened the door I saw my father lying in his coffin as plainly as I could. It gave me an awful jerk and I immediately told some of the fellows who were smoking just outside the usual place between the guns, and I also told dear old Onslow, our chaplain. A few days after we arrived at Marseilles, and I heard of my father's death, and he had been buried that very day and at the time, half-past twelve in the day. I may add that at the time it was a bright, sunny day, and I had not been fretting about my father, as the latest news I had of him was that although very ill he was better. My dear old father and I were great chums, more so than is usual between a man of seventy-two and a boy of twenty, our respective ages then."

The evidence is so bulky that we may quote only a case here and there at random:

"On December 9th 1882 Mr T. G. Keulemans was living with his family in Paris. The outbreak of an epidemic of smallpox caused him to remove three of his children, including a favourite little boy of five, to London, whence he received in the course of the ensuing month several letters giving an excellent account of their health.

"On the 24th of January 1881, at half-past seven in the morning, I was suddenly awoke by hearing his voice, as I fancied, very near me. I saw a bright opaque white mass before my eyes, and in the centre of this light I saw the face of my little darling, his eyes bright, his mouth smiling. The apparition, accompanied by the sound of his voice, was too short and too sudden to be called a dream; it was too clear, too decided, to be called an effect of the imagination. So distinctly did I hear his voice that I looked round the room to see whether he was actually there. The sound I heard was that of extreme delight, such as only a happy child can utter. I thought it was the moment he woke up in London, happy and thinking of me. I said to myself: 'Thank God, little Isidore is happy as always.' Mr Keulemans describes the ensuing day as one of peculiar brightness and cheerfulness. He took a long walk with a friend, with whom he dined; and was afterwards playing a game at billiards when he again saw the apparition of his child. This made him seriously uneasy, and in spite of having received within three days the assurance of his child's perfect health he expressed to his wife a conviction that he was dead. Next day a

letter arrived saying that the child was ill; but the father was convinced that this was only an attempt to break the news; and, in fact, the child had died, after a few hours' illness, at the exact time of the first apparition."

Another case as recited by Madame D——, of St Gaudens, is to be found in "Posthumous Humanity." She says:

"I was still a young girl, and slept with my elder sister. One evening we had just retired to bed and blown out the light. The smouldering fire on the hearth still feebly lighted the room. Upon turning my eyes towards the fireplace I perceived, to my amazement, a priest seated before the fire and warming himself. He had the corpulence, the features, and the general appearance of one of our uncles who lived in the neighbourhood, where he was an archbishop. I at once called my sister's attention. She looked in the same direction, and saw the same apparition. She also recognised our uncle. An indescribable terror seized us both, and we cried 'Help!' with all our might. My father, who slept in an adjoining room, awakened by these desperate cries, jumped out of bed and ran in with a candle in his hand. The phantom had disappeared, and we saw no one in the room. The next morning a letter was received informing us that our uncle had died the previous evening.

"At Wiesbaden, Professor Ebenan, whose old sister kept his house, stated that he had a friend residing forty or fifty miles off—likewise a professor—who was very poor and had a large family. On hearing that his wife was dying, Mr E—— went to see them, and brought back their eldest boy, for whom a little bed was put up in Mr E——'s room.

"One morning, about ten days after, Mr E—— called and asked me: 'Do you believe that at the moment of death you may appear to one whom you love?' I replied: 'Yes, I do.' 'Well,' he said, 'we shall see. I have noted the day and the hour, for last night after I went to bed the child said sweetly (in German): "Yes, dear mamma, I see you." To which I replied: "No, dear boy, it is I; I am come to bed." "No," he said, "it is dear mamma, she is standing there smiling at me," pointing to the side of the bed.' On his next visit Mr Ebenan told us that he had received a letter informing him that at that time, and on that evening, the wife had

breathed her last."

In some cases a vague shadowy form is seen which gradually acquires definiteness. Here is an interesting example contributed to "Proceedings," vol. x., by a Mr T. A.:—

"9th May 1892.

"I saw a darkish vapour leave my father's head when he died, about twelve years ago, and it formed into a figure full-sized, and for seven consecutive nights (I) saw it in my room, and saw it go each night into the next room, in which he died. It became more distinct each night and brighter each night, till it was quite brilliant, even dazzling, by the seventh night. It lasted, say, one and a half minutes. It was quite dark when the phantom used to appear. I was quite awake, going to bed; [age] thirty two."

In other cases what is first seen is a glow of light—the apparition subsequently appearing in it.

Mr R. W. Raper, of Trinity College, Oxford, made the following statement to the Society for Psychical Research:—

"'Just before Christmas 1894 I went over to Liverpool with one of my brothers and my sister. It was a very fine clear day and there was a great crowd of people shopping in the streets. We were walking down Lord-street, one of the principal streets, when, passing me, I saw an old uncle of mine whom I knew very little, and had not seen for a very long time, though he lived near me. I saw three distinct shapes hobbling past (he was lame), one after another, in a line. It didn't seem to strike me at the moment as being in the least curious, not even there being three shapes in a line. I said to my sister: "I have just seen Uncle E——, and I am sure he is dead." I said this, as it were, mechanically, and not feeling at all impressed. Of course my brother and sister laughed. We thought nothing more about it while in Liverpool. The first thing my mother said to us when getting home was: "I have some news"; and then she told us that this uncle had died early that morning. I don't know the particular hour. I saw the three shapes at about twelve in the morning. I felt

perfectly fit and well, and was not thinking of my uncle in the least, nor did I know he was ill. Both my brother and my sister heard me say that I had seen him and believed he was dead, and they were equally astonished at hearing of his death on our return home. My uncle and I knew each other very little. In fact, he hardly knew me by sight, although he knew me well when I was a small child.'

"The corroboration from the percipient's mother and sister is quite ample; the day of the agent's death coincided with the apparition, but the hour is not certainly known."

Another well-known case is that of Prince Victor Duleep Singh, who writes:

"On Saturday, October 21st, 1893, I was in Berlin with Lord Carnarvon. We went to a theatre together and returned before midnight. I went to bed, leaving, as I always do, a bright light in the room (electric light). As I lay in bed I found myself looking at an oleograph which hung on the wall opposite my bed. I saw distinctly the face of my father, the Maharajah Duleep Singh, looking at me, as it were, out of this picture; not like a portrait of him, but his real head. The head about filled the picture frame. I continued looking, and still saw my father looking at me with an intent expression. Though not in the least alarmed, I was so puzzled that I got out of bed to see what the picture really was. It was an oleograph commonplace picture of a girl holding a rose and leaning out of a balcony, an arch forming the background. The girl's face was quite small, whereas my father's head was the size of life and filled the frame."

The Prince's father had been in ill-health for some time, but nothing alarming was to be expected. On the day following the dream he mentioned it to Lord Carnarvon, and on the evening of that day Lord Carnarvon handed him a telegram announcing the elder Prince's death. He had had an apoplectic seizure on the previous evening and never recovered. It is interesting to note that he had often said that he would try to appear to his son at death if they happened to be apart. The account is confirmed by Lord Carnarvon.

It sometimes happens that the point of hallucination is not quite reached. The following instance, communicated to the Society for Psychical Research, is

straightforward enough:

> "'20 Rankeillor Street, Edinburgh,
>
> "'December 27th, 1883.
>
> "'In January 1871 I was living in the West Indies. On the 7th of that month I got up with a strong feeling that there was something happening at my old home in Scotland. At seven A.M. I mentioned to my sister-in-law my strange dread, and said even at that hour what I dreaded was taking place.
>
> "'By the next mail I got word that at eleven A.M. on the 7th of January my sister died. The island I lived in was at St Kitts, and the death took place in Edinburgh. Please note the hours and allow for the difference in time, and you will notice at least a remarkable coincidence. I may add I never knew of her illness.
>
> "'A. C——N.'
>
> "In answer to inquiries, Mr C——n adds: 'I never at any other time had a feeling in any way resembling the particular time I wrote about. At the time I wrote about I was in perfect health, and in every way in comfortable circumstances.'"

There is nothing unreasonable in the assumption that telepathy is the agency primarily concerned in these manifestations. The idea having been received, a hallucination is built up, so to speak, by the percipient. A truly hallucinable person can suggest to himself his own hallucinations with no external aid, but a non-hallucinable personage cannot induce these hallucinations at all. Dr Hugh Wingfield stated to the Society for Psychical Research that the case of one of his patients proved that hallucinations could be produced by self-suggestion. "He could, by a simple effort of the mind, himself believe almost any delusion—*e.g.* that he was riding on horseback, that he was a dog, or anything else, or that he saw snakes—if left to himself the delusion vanished slowly. Anyone else could remove it at once by a counter-suggestion. He made," he adds, "these experiments without my consent, as I consider them unsafe."

Hallucination is at times accompanied by curious organic effects. One of the commonest of these is a feeling of cold—generally described as a "chill" or "cold shudder." The following example is taken from the Census of Hallucinations of the Society for Psychical Research:—

FROM MISS K. M.

(*The account was written in 1889.*)

"[About twenty years ago] I was about ten years old, and was staying with friends in Kensington. Between the hours of eight and nine P.M., we were all sitting in the drawing-room with the door open, [it] being a very warm evening. Suddenly I experienced a cold shudder, and on looking through the door opposite which I was sitting, I saw the figure of a little old lady dressed in a long brown cloak with a large brown hat, carrying a basket, glide down the stairs and disappear in the room next the drawing-room. The impression was that of someone I had never seen. I was talking on ordinary subjects, neither ill, in grief, or anxiety. There were several other people in the room, but no one noticed anything but myself. I have never had any experience of this kind before or since."

Occasionally, but very rarely, pain is described as resulting from a hallucination. Other effects include fainting fits and tactile impressions. Noise would appear in some cases to produce visual hallucinations, by creating in the hearer a strong expectation of seeing something corresponding to it, or that may account for it. From "Phantasms of the Living" we glean the following:—

"Between sleeping and waking this morning, I perceived a dog running about in a field (an ideal white and tan sporting dog), and the next moment I heard a dog barking outside my window. Keeping my closed eyes on the vision, I found that *it came and went with the* barking of the dog outside; getting fainter, however, each time."

A weak state of health on the part of the percipient would seem to be conducive to hallucinatory visions. Here is a case in point contributed to the "Society for Psychical Research Proceedings," vol. x., by a Professor G——:

"Saw an old woman with red cloak, nursing a child in her arms. She sat on a boulder. Place: a grassy moor or upland, near Shotts, in Lanarkshire. Date: over twenty years ago. Early autumn, in bright sunny weather. Made several attempts to reach her, but she always vanished before I could get up to the stone. Place far from any dwelling, and no spot where anyone could be concealed.

"[I was] walking; had been slightly troubled with insomnia which afterwards became worse. Age about thirty.

"No one [was with me]. I heard a vague report that a woman with red cloak was sometimes seen on the moor. Can't now remember whether I had heard of that report before I saw the figure—but think I had not.

"Saw many years ago (age about twenty-one), a dog sitting beside me in my room: saw this only once: was troubled slightly with insomnia at the time which afterwards became worse."

The percipient's own view, the collector tells us, is that the experience on the moor was entirely due to "nerves," as both then and previously when he saw the dog he had been much overworked, and in each case a severe illness followed.

Not always does a visual hallucination take the form of a living human form. Occasionally the object seen or the sound heard is non-human in character. In insanity and in diseases such cases are frequently met with, the hallucination being often of a grotesque or horrible sort. Thus we have a case in which a young child beheld a vision of dwarfish gnomes dancing on the wall. Among the phantasms of inanimate objects in the collection of the late E. Gurney were a star, a firework bursting into stars, a firefly, a crown, landscape vignettes, a statue, the end of a draped coffin coming in through the door, and a bright oval surrounding the words "Wednesday, October 15, Death." Geometrical patterns, sometimes taking very complicated forms, comprise another known type of hallucination.

As to a theory for hallucinations, the most acceptable one is that they have their origin in the brain, and that the senses are made to share in the deception. There is little doubt that William Blake's hallucinations were voluntary. Gurney refers to a friend, a painter, who was able to project a

vision of his sitter out into space and paint from it. We have already seen that a hypnotic agent can cause his subject not merely to see things but to feel them, even to the extent of crying out with pain when an imaginary lighted match is applied to his finger.

CHAPTER VI

PHANTASMS OF THE DEAD

Thus far I have devoted myself to an investigation of phenomena for which the theory of telepathy is not inapplicable. It is, however, when we come to discuss hallucinations from which the idea of a living agent is apparently excluded that I feel myself entering on even more delicate and mysterious territory. Having dealt with phantasms of persons at the point of death, I now propose to deal with phantasms of persons already dead. Where, indeed, the death has been very recent, the telepathic theory still serves, for the reception conveyed by the dying agent might conceivably remain dormant in the sub-consciousness of the percipient, and only be aroused in a dream or during a propitious waking moment.

This would apply to the case of a lady who saw the body of a well-known London physician, about ten hours after death, lying in a bare unfurnished room, which turned out to be a cottage hospital abroad. Mr Myers, in his "Human Personality," has collected a large number of examples of apparitions of departed spirits, upon which he lays the utmost stress, because they, more than any other kind of evidence, tend to support his great theory of the survival of personality. If, he reasons, we can gain a number of well-authenticated cases of hallucinations projected telepathically from an agent before death, an equal amount of evidence of hallucinations projected by an agent after death would prove the continuance of life beyond the grave! And some of the cases which the Society of Psychical Research, both in this country and America, have collected are certainly of an impressive character.

Unhappily, most of the best and most convincing cases are too long to be given here; they cannot even profitably be summarised.

In one instance Mr F. G. of Boston, whose high character and good position are vouched for by Professor Royce and Dr Hodgson, states that nine years after the death of a favourite sister an apparition appeared before him:

> "The hour was high noon, and the sun was shining cheerfully into my room. While busily smoking my cigar and writing out my orders, I suddenly became conscious that someone was sitting on my left, with one arm resting on the table. Quick as a flash I turned, and distinctly saw the form of my dead sister, and for a brief second or so looked her squarely in the face; and so sure was I that it was she, that I sprang forward in delight, calling her by name, and as I did so the apparition instantly vanished."

But that is not the most extraordinary part of the story. The visitation so impressed the percipient that he took the next train home and related to his parents what had occurred. He particularly mentioned a bright red line or scratch on the right-hand side of his sister's face, which he had distinctly seen:

> "... When I mentioned this, my mother rose trembling to her feet, and nearly fainted away, and as soon as she sufficiently recovered her self-possession, with tears streaming down her face, she exclaimed that I had indeed seen my sister, as no living mortal but herself was aware of the scratch, which she had accidentally made while doing some little act of kindness after my sister's death.... In proof, neither my father nor any of our family had detected it, and positively were unaware of the incident, yet *I saw the scratch as bright as if just made*. So strangely impressed was my mother, that even after she had retired to rest she got up and dressed, came to me, and told me *she knew* that I had seen my sister. A few weeks later my mother died."

Now, is it not a little singular that, although both Dr Hodgson and Mr Myers record this incident, the theory of telepathy between a living agent and a living percipient does not occur to them? Is it not conceivable that the mother, on whose mind the incident of the scratch on the features of the corpse had admittedly preyed, should have unwittingly communicated her secret to her son? In other words, the mother projected a phantasm of her dead daughter to the mind of her son.

In the "Proceedings of the Society" there is a case which, according to Mr Stead, "appears to suggest that the deceased are continuing to take an interest in mundane affairs." The story is communicated by Miss Dodson. On

Sunday, 5th June 1887, close upon midnight, Miss Dodson was roused by hearing her name called three times. She answered twice, thinking it was her uncle. The third time she recognised the voice of her mother, who had been dead sixteen years. "I said," continued Miss Dodson, "'Mamma!'"

> "She then came round a screen near my bedside with two children in her arms and placed them in my arms and put the bedclothes over them, and said: 'Lucy, promise me to take care of them, for their mother is just dead.' I said: 'Yes, mamma.' She repeated: '*Promise* me to take care of them.' I replied: 'Yes, I promise you,' and added, 'Oh, mamma, stay and speak to me, I am so wretched.' She replied: 'Not yet, my child,' then she seemed to go round the screen again and I remained, feeling the children to be still in my arms and fell asleep. When I awoke there was nothing. Tuesday morning, 7th June, I received the news of my sister-in-law's death. She had given birth to a child three weeks before, which I did not know till after her death."

Professor Sidgwick says, as the result of an interesting conversation with Miss Dodson, that the children were of the ages corresponding with the ages of the children of her sister-in-law; they seemed to be a little girl and a baby newly born. The only way an ingenious sceptic can get round this case is by supposing that a telepathic impulse from the living brother might conceivably embody itself in the form of his mother. But the idea of a brother in Belgium being able to transmit a telepathic message in the assumed shape and with the voice of his mother, who had been dead for sixteen years, and also to telepath into existence in London the two little children who were living in his house at Bruges, is rather a clumsy hypothesis. But what other have we?

> "Mr Theobald, an Australian, forwards to the Society a paper discovered amongst the effects of his uncle, now dead. The apparition, as will be seen, occurred on October 24th, 1860, and the account is endorsed on 9th November by the percipient's father. Further particulars sent to Mr B —— by the percipient (who is here called Mr D——) are dated November 13th, 1860. The first account seems to have been sent by the percipient to his father, and by the father to Mr B——"

The percipient had been identified, and confirms, as will be seen, this early narrative, which is as follows:—

> "On the evening of Wednesday, October 24th, 1860, having retired to bed about nine o'clock, I had slept, I conclude, about two hours, making it then about eleven o'clock P.M. I was awoke from my sleep by a hand touching my forehead, and the well-known voice of Mrs B—— pronouncing my name, E——. I started up and sat in bed, rubbed my eyes, and then saw Mrs B——. From the head to the waist the figure was distinct, clear, and well defined; but from the waist downwards it was all misty, and the lower part transparent. She appeared to be dressed in black silk. Her countenance was grave and rather sad, but not unhappy.
>
> "The words she first uttered were: 'I have left dear John.' What followed related entirely to myself, and she was permitted by a most kind Providence to speak words of mercy, promise, and comfort, and assurance that what I most wished would come to pass. She came to me in an hour of bitter mental agony, and was sent as a messenger of mercy...."

Occasionally there is a curious variant, when the phantasm is auditory and not visible. In the case published in "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research," vol. iii. p. 90, Mr Wambey heard a phantasmal voice as though in colloquy with his own thought. He was planning a congratulatory letter to a friend, when the words "What, write to a dead man? write to a dead man?" sounded clearly in his ears. The friend had been dead for some days.

Gurney was much impressed by the unexpectedly large proportion of cases where the percipient informed us that there had been a *compact* between himself and the deceased person that whichever passed away first should try to appear to the other. "Considering," he adds, "what an extremely small number of persons make such a compact, compared with those who do not, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that its existence has a certain efficacy."

A characteristic case is thus reported by a Mr Bellamy:

> "When a girl at school my wife made an agreement with a fellow-pupil, Miss W., that the one of them who died first should, if divinely permitted, appear after her decease to the survivor. In 1874 my wife, who had not seen or heard anything of her former school friend for some

years, casually heard of her death. The news reminded her of her former agreement, and then, becoming nervous, she told me of it. I knew of my wife's compact, but I had never seen a photograph of her friend, or heard any description of her." (Mr Bellamy told Gurney in conversation that his mind had not been in the least dwelling on the compact.)

"A night or two afterwards, as I was sleeping with my wife, a fire brightly burning in my room and a candle alight, I suddenly awoke and saw a lady sitting by the side of the bed where my wife was sleeping soundly. At once I sat up in the bed and gazed so intently that even now I can recall her form and features. Had I the pencil or the brush of a Millais I could transfer to canvas an exact likeness of the ghostly visitant. I remember that I was much struck, as I looked intently at her, with the careful arrangement of her coiffure, every single hair being most carefully brushed down. How long I sat and gazed I cannot say, but directly the apparition ceased to be, I got out of bed to see if any of my wife's garments had by any means optically deluded me. I found nothing in the line of vision but a bare wall. Hallucination on my part I rejected as out of the question, and I doubted not that I had really seen an apparition. Returning to bed, I lay till my wife some hours after awoke, and then I gave her an account of her friend's appearance. I described her colour, form, etc., all of which exactly tallied with my wife's recollection of Miss W. Finally I asked, 'But was there any special point to strike one in her appearance?' 'Yes,' my wife promptly replied, 'we girls used to tease her at school for devoting so much time to the arrangement of her hair.' This was the very thing which I have said so much struck me. Such are the simple facts.

"I will only add that till 1874 I had never seen an apparition, and that I have not seen one since.

"ARTHUR BELLAMY."

The following case, from "Proceedings," vol. viii. p. 178, bears a distinct resemblance to the old-fashioned ghost stories. Mrs M., the informant, writes under date 15th December 1891:

"Before relating my experience of having seen a ghost, I should like my

readers thoroughly to understand that I had not the slightest idea that the house in which my husband and I were living was haunted, or that the family residing there for many years before us had had any family troubles. The house was delightfully situated [etc.]. The house being partly new and partly old we occupied the old part for our sleeping apartments. There were two staircases leading to them, with a landing and window, adjoining a morning sitting-room. One night on retiring to my bedroom about 11 o'clock, I thought I heard a peculiar moaning sound, and someone sobbing as if in great distress of mind. I listened very attentively, and still it continued; so I raised the gas in my bedroom, and then went to the landing window of which I have spoken, drew the blind aside; and there on the grass was a very beautiful young girl in kneeling posture before a soldier, in a general's uniform, sobbing and clasping her hands together, entreating for pardon; but alas! he only waved her away from him. So much did I feel for the girl, that without a moment's hesitation I ran down the staircase to the door opening upon the lawn, and begged her to come in and tell me her sorrow. The figures then disappeared! Not in the least nervous did I feel then;—went again to my bedroom, took a sheet of writing paper and wrote down what I had seen. [Mrs M. has found and sent us this paper. The following words are written in pencil on a half sheet of notepaper:—"March 13th, 1886. Have just seen visions on lawn:—a soldier in general's uniform,—a young lady kneeling to him. 11.40 P.M."] My husband was away from home when this event occurred, but a lady friend was staying with me, so I went to her bedroom and told her that I had been rather frightened by some noises;—could I stay with her a little while? A few days afterwards I found myself in a very nervous state; but it seemed so strange that I was not frightened at the time.

"It appears the story is only too true. The youngest daughter of this very old proud family had had an illegitimate child; and her parents and relatives would not recognise her again, and she died broken-hearted. The soldier was a near relative (also a connection of my husband's); and it was in vain she tried to gain his—the soldier's—forgiveness. [In a subsequent letter Sir X. Y.'s career is described. He was a distinguished officer.]

"So vivid was my remembrance of the features of the soldier that some

months after the occurrence, when I happened to be calling with my husband at a house where there was a portrait of him, I stepped before it and said: 'Why, look! There is the General!' And sure enough it *was*."

In a subsequent letter Mrs M. writes:

"I did see the figures on the lawn after opening the door leading on to the lawn; and they by no means disappeared instantly, but more like a dissolving view—viz. gradually; and I did not leave the door until they had passed away. It was impossible for any real persons to act such a scene.... The General was born and died (in the house where I saw him).... I was not aware that the portrait of the General was in that room (where I saw it); it was the first time I had been in that room. The misfortune to the poor girl happened in 1847 or 1848."

Mrs M. then mentions that a respectable local tradesman hearing of the incident remarked: "That is not an uncommon thing to see *her* about the place, poor soul! She was a badly used girl."

Mr M. writes as follows under date 23rd December 1891:—

"I have seen my wife's letter in regard to the recognition of Sir X. Y.'s picture at ——. Nothing was said by me to her on the subject; but knowing the portrait to be a remarkably good likeness I proposed calling at the house (which was that of a nephew of Sir X. Y.'s), being anxious to see what effect it would have upon my wife. Immediately on entering the room she almost staggered back, and turned pale, saying—looking hard at the picture—'Why, there's the General!' ... Being a connection of the family I knew all about the people, but my wife was then a stranger, and I had never mentioned such things to her; in fact they had been almost forgotten."

Here is a case where the phantasm was visible to several persons at the same time. It is given by Mr Charles A. W. Lett, of the Military and Royal Naval Club, Albemarle Street, W.

"December 3rd, 1885.

"On the 5th April 1873 my wife's father, Captain Towns, died at his

residence, Cranbrook, Rose Bay, near Sydney, N. S. Wales. About six weeks after his death my wife had occasion one evening about nine o'clock to go to one of the bedrooms in the house. She was accompanied by a young lady, Miss Berthon, and as they entered the room—the gas burning all the time—they were amazed to see, reflected as it were on the polished surface of the wardrobe, the image of Captain Towns. It was barely half figure, the head, shoulders, and part of the arms only showing—in fact, it was like an ordinary medallion portrait, but life-size. The face appeared wan and pale, as it did before his death, and he wore a kind of grey flannel jacket, in which he had been accustomed to sleep. Surprised and half-alarmed at what they saw, their first idea was that a portrait had been hung in the room, and that what they saw was its reflection; but there was no picture of the kind.

"Whilst they were looking and wondering, my wife's sister, Miss Towns, came into the room, and before either of the others had time to speak, she exclaimed, 'Good gracious! Do you see papa?' One of the housemaids happened to be passing downstairs at the moment, and she was called in and asked if she saw anything, and her reply was, 'Oh, miss! the master.' Graham—Captain Towns' old body-servant—was then sent for, and he also immediately exclaimed, 'Oh, Lord save us! Mrs Lett, it's the captain!' The butler was called, and then Mrs Crane, my wife's nurse, and they both said what they saw. Finally, Mrs Towns was sent for, and, seeing the apparition, she advanced towards it with her arm extended as if to touch it, and as she passed her hand over the panel of the wardrobe the figure gradually faded away, and never again appeared, though the room was regularly occupied for a long time after.

"These are the simple facts of the case, and they admit of no doubt; no kind of intimation was given to any of the witnesses; the same question was put to each one as they came into the room, and the reply was given without hesitation by each. It was by the merest accident that I did not see the apparition. I was in the house at the time, but did not hear when I was called."

"C. A. W. LETT."

"We the undersigned, having read the above statement, certify that it is

strictly accurate, as we were both witnesses of the apparition.

"SARA LETT,

"SIBBIE SMYTH

"(*née* TOWNS.)"

"Mrs Lett assures me," wrote Gurney, "that neither she nor her sister ever experienced a hallucination of the senses on any other occasion. She is positive that the recognition of the appearance on the part of each of the later witnesses was *independent*, and not due to any suggestion from the persons already in the room."

The following, taken from the "Report on the Census of Hallucinations," may belong to either the ante-mortem or post-mortem category:—

> "At Redhill on Thanksgiving Day, between eight and nine in the evening, when I was taking charge of the little daughter of a friend, during my friend's absence on that evening, I left the child sleeping in the bedroom, and went to drop the blinds in two neighbouring rooms, being absent about three minutes. On returning to the child's room in the full light of the gas-burner from above I distinctly saw, coming from the child's cot, a white figure, which figure turned, looked me full in the face, and passed down the staircase. I instantly followed, leaned over the banisters in astonishment, and saw the glistening of the white drapery as the figure passed down the staircase, through the lighted hall, and silently through the hall door itself, which was barred, chained, and locked. I felt for the moment perfectly staggered, went back to the bedroom, and found the child peacefully sleeping. I related the circumstance to the mother immediately on her return late that night. She was incredulous, but said that my description of the figure answered to that of an invalid aunt of the child's. The next morning came a telegram to say that this relation who had greatly wished to see her niece had died between eight and nine the previous evening.
>
> "I had just put down the 'Pickwick Papers,' with which I had been whiling away the time, was free from trouble and in good health."

Sister Bertha, Superior of the House of Mercy at Bovey Tracey, Newton Abbot, states:

> "On the night of November 10th, 1861, I was up in my bed watching, because there was a person not quite well in the next room. I heard a voice which I recognised at once as familiar to me, and at first thought of my sister. It said in the brightest and most cheerful tone, 'I am here with you.' I answered, looking and seeing nothing, 'Who are you?' The voice said, 'You mustn't know yet.' I heard nothing more and saw nothing, and am certain that the door was not opened or shut. I was not in the least frightened, and felt convinced it was Lucy's [Miss Lucy Gambier Parry's] voice.
>
> "I have never doubted it from that moment. I had not heard of her being worse. The last account had been good, and I was expecting to hear that she was at Torquay. In the course of the next day (the 11th), mother told me that she had died on the morning of the 10th, rather more than twelve hours before I heard her voice."

A case reported by Mr John E. Husbands, of Melbourne House, Town Hall Square, Grimsby, is interesting:

> "I was sleeping in a hotel in Madeira in January 1885. It was a bright moonlight night. The windows were open, and the blinds up. I felt someone was in my room. On opening my eyes I saw a young fellow about twenty-five, dressed in flannels, standing at the side of my bed, and pointing with the first finger of his right hand to the place where I was lying. I lay for some seconds to convince myself of someone being really there. I then sat up and looked at him. I saw his features so plainly that I recognised them in a photograph which was shown me some days afterwards. I asked him what he wanted. He did not speak, but his eyes and hands seemed to tell me that I was in his place. As he did not answer, I struck at him with my fist as I sat up, but did not reach him, and as I was going to spring out of bed he slowly vanished through the door, which was shut, keeping his eyes upon me all the time. Upon inquiry I found that the young fellow who appeared to me died in the room I was occupying."

There is, too, the famous case of Mrs de Fréville and the gardener Bard. The percipient, who had formerly been in the employ of this somewhat eccentric lady, who was especially morbid on the subject of tombs and so forth, was in the churchyard of Hinxton, Saffron Walden, on Friday, 8th May 1885. He happened to look at the square De Fréville stone vault, when, to his amazement, he distinctly saw the old lady, with a white face, leaning on the rails. When he looked again she was gone, although it puzzled him to know how she could have got out of the churchyard, as, in order to reach any of the gates, she must have passed him. Next day he was told that Mrs de Fréville was dead. As the apparition was seen about seven and a half hours after death, it could, as I have suggested, be considered a telepathic impression transmitted at the moment of death and remaining latent in the brain of the percipient; otherwise, the case belongs to the category of Haunting, which we will glance at in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

ON "HAUNTINGS" AND KINDRED PHENOMENA

"Do I believe in ghosts?" asks Mr Andrew Lang. "One can only answer: 'How do you define a ghost?' I do believe, with all students of human nature, in hallucinations of one, or of several, or even of all the senses. But as to whether such hallucinations among the sane are ever caused by physical influence from the minds of others, alive or dead, not communicated through the ordinary channels of sense, my mind is in a balance of doubt. It is a question of evidence."

If the evidence of "hauntings" were measurable by bulk alone, no phase of occultism would be more completely demonstrated. It is only when we come to examine the quality of the available data that we realise how formidable a task it is we have undertaken. In nothing, perhaps, have credulity and superstition been allowed so wide a scope; nowhere is it more difficult to winnow the grain of reliable testimony from the chaff of mythology and invention. For we must remember that the belief in ghosts is as old as the hills themselves. It is common to all countries and to all nations, and in the literature of every language are to be found tales of the supernatural scarcely less plausible than many which assail our ears to-day.

What I now set myself to investigate is that class of phenomena seemingly attached to various localities and comprising, besides apparitions, sights and sounds of various kinds and degrees. According to Mr E. T. Bennett, for twenty years assistant secretary of the Psychical Research Society, the records of the Society contain descriptions of "a large number of cases in which the evidence of the reality of phenomena incapable of ordinary explanation is absolutely conclusive."

When the sounds are intelligible, or a sentence is spelt out in response to the inquiry of the auditor, the *raison d'être* of the manifestation is more or less obvious. But there is evidence of a large number of so-called "hauntings" where steps are heard, or noises which convey no intelligible information.

Sometimes, also, we are told that simultaneously with the death of a friend bangs have been heard, which, but for the coincidence of their occurrence in association with a death, are without meaning. M. Flammarion cites several cases of this sort. The following will serve as an illustration:—[2]

> M. E. Deschaux relates that his grandfather "was awakened one evening at eleven P.M. by three very distinct raps on the door of his room. Astonished, he rose, lit the lamp, opened the door, but saw no one. Supposing that some trickster had been the cause of his disturbance, he returned to bed grumbling, but again three knocks were heard on the door. He got up quickly, intending that the culprit should pay dearly for his untimely joke, but in spite of careful search, both in the passage and on the staircase, he could not discover where this mysterious culprit had disappeared to. A third time, when he was again in bed, three raps were audible on the door. This time the grandfather had a presentiment that the sound was caused by the spirit of his mother, although nothing in the tidings he had previously received from his family incited him to this supposition. Five or six days after this manifestation a letter arrived from his own country announcing the death of his mother which had occurred precisely at the hour at which he had heard the knocks. At the moment of her death, his mother, who had a particular affection for him, had insisted that a dress which her 'boy in Paris' had some time before sent her as a present should be brought and placed on her bed."

Here we seem to have a distinct motive for the visitation; but on the other hand observe how many cases we come across where the phenomena appears to be due solely to the wanton and mischievous impulses of the invisible agents.

There is for example the case of a house in which spiritual manifestations, often of a disturbing character, were continually being produced, related by Mr Inkster Gilbertson in *The Occult Review* on the authority of a West End physician who is called Dr Macdonald. The swish of a silk dress and the slamming of doors were among the least important of the phenomena from a psychical point of view, though the sound of someone coming through a skylight and dropping on to the landing was certainly calculated to terrify the ladies, who "came up from the drawing-room screaming and shouting, expecting to find some dreadful tragedy being enacted." These manifestations

consisted entirely of sounds, but at the regular sittings which were held in the house a drawer was taken from its place in the bedroom and left on the hall stand, the loose wooden leaves which converted a billiard-table into a dining-table were slid off the end and deposited on the floor, and a screen was several times seen to fold itself up without being touched.

The most peculiar occurrences, however, were the antics of certain keys belonging to doors in the house. "The door of the front bedroom was often found locked, and the key would disappear." The doctor kept his eye on the key and presently saw it move round, locking the door, and then "he saw the last of the key disappearing through the hole." At another time the lady of the house, her children, and the maid were locked in for some hours. "The key would be kept away for days; then it would suddenly appear. One day it was found in Mrs Macdonald's lap; once it was quietly laid on the doctor's head," and so forth. On one occasion when the key was not given up the doctor called out: "Won't you send us down the key before we go?" They were passing down the stairs and, before they reached the bottom, the key was gently dropped on the doctor's head. The most careful observations failed to discover the known means by which the feats could be accomplished. The evidence of the intelligence and of the mischievous disposition of these uncanny tricksters was borne out by sounds of dancing being heard outside the door just afterwards.

"The possible non-ghostly explanations," says Mrs Sidgwick, "of what pass as ghostly phenomena may be conveniently classed with reference to the various sorts of error by which the evidence to such phenomena is liable to be affected. I should state these as (1) hoaxing, (2) exaggeration or inadequate description, (3) illusion, (4) mistaken identity, (5) hallucination.... I think, however, that anyone who has read the evidence will at once discard the first of these alternatives so far as the great mass of the first-hand narratives is concerned."

There are not a few cases, however, where the ghostly manifestations have been found to be due to human agency. The following instance was brought to my notice by a well-known firm of estate agents at Tunbridge Wells:—

> "There is an old Manor House in this district which is locally known as the 'Haunted House.' The original mansion was, according to Hasted,

> one of the homes of the Colepepers. In the reign of Charles II. the mansion was rebuilt in the style of the period. It has, however, outlived its purpose, is out of repair and was for many years let in tenements to labourers. It is now untenanted. Some few months ago the lurid tales of ghostly visitors induced a local spiritualist, encouraged by some mischievous friends, to hold a *séance* in the house at midnight, and to perambulate the rambling building from time to time during the night. The spirits lived up to their reputation and gave all kinds of manifestations which included streams of water from invisible buckets that met the investigator as he groped up the staircase and along the passages. In the end the whole thing was found to be a hoax and to have been organised by the spiritualist's friends. He is not communicative on the subject. The old house still stands empty and deserves a better fate."

The classic case of haunting in England is, perhaps, that of Willingdon Mill. Other spectre-ridden edifices in the kingdom there may well be, but their stories, however grim and ghastly, are apt to relapse into insignificance beside those narrated of this famous Tyneside building.

Willingdon Mill, which is situated in Northumberland nearly half-way between Newcastle and North Shields, was built about the year 1800. When, thirty-four years later, certain unaccountable noises and other phenomena began to attract attention the occupants consisted of a worthy Quaker, Joseph Proctor by name, his wife, servants and family. Joseph Proctor used to keep a diary wherein he chronicled the strange happenings in his house. The greater portion of this was published in *The Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, vol. v., but full accounts of the affair have appeared in many publications, among which may be mentioned Howitt's "Visits to Remarkable Places," Crowe's "Night Side of Nature," "The Local Historian's Table Book," and Stead's "Real Ghost Stories."

It was a servant girl that first called attention to the mysterious noises. She positively affirmed that she had heard "a dull heavy tread on the boarded floor of the room unoccupied above, commonly pacing backwards and forwards and, on coming over to the window, giving the floor such a shake as to cause the windows of the nursery to rattle violently in their frames." This disturbance usually lasted about ten minutes at a time. At first the girl's tale was discredited, but before many days had elapsed every member of the

family had heard precisely what the girl described. The room was vigorously searched but no clue to the phantom footsteps was forthcoming. Even the expedient of covering the floor with flour was without result; the "dull, heavy tread" left no traces upon the whitened boards.

It was not long before other unaccountable noises were heard all over the house and ghostly figures were seen by several persons. To illustrate the kind of occurrence that was constantly going on in the house, and which, indeed, became so frequent that they were thought very little of, I quote the following extracts from Joseph Proctor's diary:—

> "7 mo., 14th, 1841:—J. and E. P. heard the spirit in their own room, and in the room overhead, making a noise as of something heavy being hoisted or rolled, or like a barrel set down on its end; also noises in the Camproom of various and unaccountable character.

> "8 mo., 3rd.—Since the last night there have been few nights during which some branch of the family has not heard our visitor. One night, J. P. was awoke and heard something hastily walk, with a step like that of a child of 8 or 10 years, from the foot of the bed towards the side of the room, and come back seemingly towards the door, in a run; then it gave two stamps with one foot; there was a loud rustling as if of a frock or night-dress. I need scarcely say the door was locked, and I am quite certain there was no other human being in the room save E. P., who was asleep. The two stamps aroused E. P. out of her sleep. About this time Joseph, on two or three occasions, said he had heard voices from underneath his bed and from other parts of the room, and described seeing on one occasion a boy in a drab hat much like his own, the boy much like himself too, walking backwards and forwards between the windows and the wardrobe. He was afraid, but did not speak.
>
> "Noises as of a band-box falling close at hand, as of someone running upstairs when no one was there, and like the raking of a coal rake, were heard about this time by different members of the family."

"8 mo., 6th.—On the night of the third, just after the previous memorandum was written, about 10.30 P.M., the servants having all retired to bed, J. and E. P. heard a noise like a clothes horse being thrown down in the kitchen. Soon the noises became louder and appeared as though some persons had burst into the house on the ground floor and were clashing the doors and throwing things down. Eventually J. P. got one of the servants to go downstairs with him, when all was found right, no one there, and apparently nothing moved. The noises now began on the third storey, and the servants were so much alarmed that it was difficult to get them to go to bed at all that night.

"8 mo., 6th to 12th.—My brother-in-law, George Carr, was with us. He heard steppings and loud rumblings in the middle of the night, and other noises."

A curious feature in this case was the number of apparitions seen. Thus we have clear testimony of the presence of a lady in a lavender silk dress, of an old bald-headed man in a flowing robe like a surplice, of a lady in grey, and of a horrid eyeless spectre who glared fixedly at the world through empty eyeholes. Added to these there were animals of all sorts and descriptions, cats, monkeys, rabbits and sheep.

"On one occasion, during the period that Thomas was courting Mary, he was standing at the window outside (no followers being allowed inside, lest fabulous reports were sent abroad). He had given the usual signal. The night was clear, and the stars beamed forth their light from a cloudless sky. Suddenly something appeared which arrested my father's attention. Looking towards the mill, which was divided from the house by an open space, he beheld what he supposed was a whitish cat. It came walking along in close proximity to his feet. Thinking Miss Puss very cheeky he gave her a kick; but his foot felt nothing and the cat quietly continued its march, followed by my father, until it suddenly disappeared from his gaze. Still the ghost was not thought of by him.

Returning to the window and looking in the same direction, he again beheld it suddenly come into existence. This time it came hopping like a rabbit, coming quite as close to his feet as before. He determined to have a good rap at it, and took deliberate aim; but, as before, his foot went through it and felt nothing. Again he followed it, and it disappeared at the same spot as its predecessor. The third time he went to the window, and in a few moments it made its third appearance, not like unto a cat or a rabbit, but fully as large as a sheep, and quite luminous. On it came and my father was fixed to the spot. All muscular power seemed for the moment paralysed. It moved on, disappearing at the same spot as the preceding apparitions. My father declared that if it was possible for 'hair to stand on end' his did just then. Thinking that for once he had seen sufficient, he went home, keeping the knowledge of this scene to himself."

It is not to be wondered at if the queer doings at Willingdon Mill began to be rumoured abroad. They reached the ears of a certain Dr Edward Drury of Sunderland, who was, not unnaturally, rather sceptical. He asked and obtained permission to sit up alone in the house one night accompanied only by his faithful dog and with a pair of pistols in his pocket. His opportunity came in July, 1840, when all the family, with the exception of Joseph Proctor himself, was away from the mill. The night was fruitful with horror, and the following letter addressed to the miller nearly a week after the event tells its own tale:—

"Monday Morning,

"6th July, 1840.

"*To* MR PROCTOR.

"DEAR SIR,—I am sorry I was not at home to receive you yesterday, when you kindly called to inquire for me. I am happy to state that I am really surprised that I have been so little affected as I am after that horrid and most awful affair. The only bad effect I feel is a heavy dulness in one of my ears—the right one. I call it a heavy dullness, because I not only do not hear distinctly but feel in it a constant noise. This I never was affected with before; but I doubt not it will go off. I am persuaded

that no one went to your house at any time *more disbelieving in respect to seeing anything peculiar*; now no one can be more satisfied than myself. I will, in the course of a few days, send you a full detail of all I saw and heard. Mr Spence and two other gentlemen came down to my house in the afternoon to hear my detail; but, sir, could I account for these noises from natural causes, yet, so firmly am I persuaded of the horrid apparition, that I would affirm that what I saw with my eyes was a punishment to me for my scoffing and unbelief; that I am assured that, as far as the horror is concerned, they are happy that believe and have not seen ... it will be a great source of joy to me if you never allow your young family to be in that horrid house again. Hoping you will write a few lines at your leisure, I remain, dear sir, yours very truly,

"EDWARD DRURY."

To this letter the sturdy Quaker sent a characteristic reply.

"Willingdon,

"7th mo., 9, 1840.

"Respected Friend, E. DRURY,—Have been at Sunderland, I did not receive thine of the 6th till yesterday morning. I am glad to hear thou art getting well over the effects of thy unlooked-for visitation. I hold in respect thy bold and manly assertion of the truth in the face of that ridicule and ignorant conceit with which that which is called the supernatural, in the present day, is usually assailed.

"I shall be glad to receive thy detail, in which it will be needful to be very particular in showing that thou couldst not be asleep, or attacked by nightmare, or mistake a reflection of the candle, as some sagaciously suppose. I remain, respectfully, thy friend,

"JOSH. PROCTOR.

"*P.S.*—I have about thirty witnesses to various things which cannot be satisfactorily accounted for on any other principle than that of spiritual agency."

Four days later Dr Drury wrote out a full account of his experience.

"Sunderland,

"13th July 1840.

"DEAR SIR,—I hereby, according to promise in my last letter, forward you a true account of what I saw and heard at your house, in which I was led to pass the night from various rumours circulated by most respectable parties, particularly from an account by my esteemed friend, Mr Davison, whose name I mentioned to you in a former letter. Having received your sanction to visit your mysterious dwelling, I went, on the 3rd of July, accompanied by a friend of mine, T. Hudson. This was not according to promise, nor in accordance with my first intent, as I wrote you I would come alone; but I felt gratified at your kindness in not alluding to the liberty I had taken, as it ultimately proved for the best. I must here mention that, not expecting you at home, I had in my pocket a brace of pistols, determining in my mind to let one of them drop before the miller, as if by accident, for fear he should presume to play tricks upon me; but after my interview with you, I felt there was no occasion for weapons, and did not load them, after you had allowed us to inspect as minutely as we pleased every portion of the house. I sat down on the third storey landing, fully expecting to account for any noises that I might hear, in a philosophical manner. This was about eleven o'clock P.M. About ten minutes to twelve we both heard a noise, as if a number of people were pattering with their bare feet upon the floor; and yet, so singular was the noise, that I could not minutely determine from whence it proceeded. A few minutes afterwards we heard a noise, as if someone was knocking with his knuckles among our feet; this was followed by a hollow cough from the very room from which the apparition proceeded. The only noise after this, was as if a person was rustling against the wall in coming upstairs. At a quarter to one I told my friend that, feeling a little cold, I would like to go to bed, as we might hear the noise equally well there; he replied he would not go to bed till daylight. I took up a note which I had accidentally dropped and began to read it, after which I took out my watch to ascertain the time, and found that it wanted ten minutes to one. In taking my eyes from the watch they became riveted upon a closet door, which I distinctly saw open, and saw also the figure of a female attired in greyish garments, with the head inclining downwards, and one hand pressed upon the chest as if in pain, and the

other—viz. the right hand—extended towards the floor, with the index finger pointing downward. It advanced with an apparently cautious step across the floor towards me; immediately as it approached my friend, who was slumbering, its right hand was extended towards him; I then rushed at it, giving, as Mr Proctor states, a most awful yell; but instead of grasping it I fell upon my friend, and I recollected nothing distinctly for nearly three hours afterwards. I have since learned that I was carried downstairs in an agony of fear and terror.

"I hereby certify that the above account is strictly true and correct in every respect.

"EDWARD DRURY."

So intolerable became life in this uncanny house that, in 1847, Joseph Proctor and his family moved to South Shields. For the last night of their residence was reserved a more than usually turbulent demonstration. "There were," says Mr Edmund Proctor, "continuous noises during the night, boxes being apparently dragged with heavy thuds down the now carpetless stairs, non-human footsteps stumped on the floors, doors were, or seemed to be, clashed, and impossible furniture corded at random or dragged hither and thither by inscrutable agency; in short, a pantomimic or spiritualistic repetition of all the noises incident to a household flitting. A miserable night my father and mother had of it, as I have often heard from their own lips; not so much from terror at the unearthly noises, for to these they were habituated, as dread lest this wretched fanfaronade might portend the contemporary flight of the unwelcome visitors to the new abode. Fortunately for the family this dread was not realised."

After undergoing various vicissitudes, the house was finally divided into small tenements, in which condition it still remains. But of late years nothing has been seen or heard of the ghostly visitors. Perhaps, smitten with dismay by the deterioration of their former dwelling-place, they have taken up their abode elsewhere. For Willingdon Mill, formerly gay with flowers and creepers, is now a wreck of its former self. The mill is used as a warehouse;

the stables and outhouses have been pulled down; while the house stands out gaunt and forbidding, a picture of desolation and decay.

Mr W. T. Stead, in his "Real Ghost Stories," has given us many thrilling examples of nocturnal apparitions, and of these the uncanny experience of the Rev. H. Elwyn Thomas, of 35 Park Village East, N. W., is well worth repeating.

Mr Thomas, after having conducted a service at the church at Llangynidr, accompanied three young friends of his for about half-a-mile on their homeward way.

> "When I wished good-night to my friends, it was about twenty minutes to nine, but still light enough to see a good distance. The subject of our conversation all the way from the chapel until we parted was a certain eccentric old character who then belonged to the Crickhowell church. Many laughable incidents in his life had been related by my friends for my amusement, at which I laughed heartily again and again. I walked a little farther down the road than I intended, in order to hear the end of a very amusing story about him and the vicar of a neighbouring parish. Our conversation had no reference whatever to ghosts or ghostly things. Neither were we in the mood befitting a ghostly visitation. Personally I was a strong disbeliever in ghosts, and invariably ridiculed those who I then thought superstitious enough to believe in them.
>
> "When I had walked about a hundred yards away from my friends I saw on the bank of the canal (which runs parallel with the road for six or seven miles) what I thought at the moment was an old beggar. The spot was a very lonely one. The nearest house was a good quarter of a mile away. The night was as silent as death. Not a single sound broke upon the silence from any quarter. I could not help asking myself where this old man had come from to such a place. I had not seen him in going down the road.
>
> "I then turned round quite unconcernedly to have another look at him, and had no sooner done so than I saw within half-a-yard of me one of the most remarkable and startling sights I hope it will ever be my lot to see. Almost on a level with my own face I saw that of an old man, over every feature of which the putty-coloured skin was drawn tightly, except

the forehead which was lined with deep wrinkles. The lips were extremely thin, and appeared perfectly bloodless. The toothless mouth stood half open. The cheeks were hollow and sunken like those of a corpse, and the eyes, which seemed far back in the middle of the head, were unnaturally luminous and piercing. This terrible object was wrapped in two bands of old yellow calico, one of which was drawn under the chin and over the cheeks and tied at the top of the head, the other was drawn round the top of the wrinkled forehead and fastened at the back of the head. So deep and indelible an impression it made on my mind, that were I an artist I could paint that face to-day, and reproduce the original (excepting, perhaps, the luminous eyes) as accurately as if it were photographed.

"What I have thus tried to describe in many words, I saw at a glance. Acting on the impulse of the moment, I turned my face again towards the village, and ran away from the horrible vision with all my might for about sixty yards. I then stopped and turned round to see how far I had outdistanced it, and, to my unspeakable horror, there it was still face to face with me, as if I had not moved an inch. I grasped my umbrella and raised it to strike him, and you can imagine my feelings when I could see nothing between the face and the ground except an irregular column of intense darkness, through which my umbrella went as a stick goes through water!

"I am sorry to confess that I again took to my heels with increasing speed. A little farther than the place of this second encounter, the road which led towards my host's house branched off the main road, the main road itself running right through the centre of the village, in the lower end of which it ran parallel with the churchyard wall. Having gone a few yards down the branch road, I reached a crisis in my fear and confusion when I felt I could act rationally: I determined to speak to the strange pursuer whatever he was, and I boldly turned round to face him for the third time, intending to ask him what he wanted, etc.,

"He had not followed me after I left the main road, but I could see the horribly fascinating face quite as plainly as when it was close by. It stood for two or three minutes looking intently at me from the centre of the main road. I then realised fully it was not a human being in flesh and

blood; and with every vestige of fear gone I quickly walked towards it to put my questions. But I was disappointed, for no sooner had I made towards it than it moved quickly in the direction of the village. I saw it moving along, keeping the same distance from the ground, until it reached the churchyard wall; it then crossed the wall, and disappeared near where the yew-tree stood inside. The moment it disappeared I became unconscious. When I came to myself, two hours later, I was lying in the middle of the road, cold and ill. It took me quite an hour to reach my host's house, which was less than half-a-mile away, and when I reached it I looked so white and strange that my host's daughter, who had sat down with her father to wait my return, uttered a loud scream. I could not say a word to explain what had happened, though I tried hard several times. It was five o'clock in the morning when I regained my power of speech; even then I could only speak in broken sentences. The whole of the following week I was laid up with great nervous prostration.

"The strangest part of my story remains yet to be told. My host, after questioning me closely in regard to the features of the face, the place I had first seen it and the spot where it disappeared, told me that fifteen years before that time an old recluse, answering in every detail to my description (calicoes, bands and all), lived in a house whose ruins still stand close by where I first saw it, that he was buried in the exact spot in the churchyard where I saw the face disappearing, and that he was a very strange character altogether.

"I should like to add that I had not heard a syllable about this old man before the night in question, and that all the persons referred to in the above story are still alive."

Here is a curious story which recently attracted my attention in *Light*. The narrator is a Colonel X.

"When I was a young chap I was on guard at the Tower. One night the sentry came to tell me that there was something very extraordinary going on in the White Chapel, which, in those days, was used as a storeroom.

"I went out with him, and we saw the windows lit up. We climbed up and looked in, and saw a chapter with an altar brilliantly lit up, and presently priests in vestments and boys swinging silver censers came in and arranged themselves before an altar. Then the large entrance doors opened and a procession of persons in old quaint costumes filed in. Walking alone was a lady in black, and behind her was a masked man, also in black, who carried an axe. While we looked it all faded away, and there was utter darkness.

"Of course, I talked about this vision everywhere and got so laughed at that I resolved to keep it to myself. One day a gentleman introduced himself as the keeper of the records of the Tower, and said that he had heard my story, but wished to hear it again from my own lips; and when I had told it he remarked: 'Strange to say, that very same vision has been seen by someone every thirty years since Anne Boleyn's death.'"

It not infrequently happens that houses reputed to be haunted figure in a court of law. The late Dr Frederick Lee, in "Sights and Shadows," gives an account of such a case which occurred in Ireland in the year 1890.

"A house on the marsh at Drogheda had been let by its owner, Miss Weir, to a Mr and Mrs Kinney, at an annual rental of £23.

"The last-named persons took possession of it in due course; but two days subsequently they became aware of the presence of a spirit or ghost in their sleeping chamber, which, as Mrs Kinney asserted, 'threw heavy things at her,' and so alarmed and inconvenienced her, that in a very short period both husband and wife were forced to quit their abode.

"This they did shortly after they had taken possession of it; and, because of occurrences referred to, were legally advised to decline to pay any rent. The landlady, however, refusing to release them from their bargain, at once claimed a quarter's rent; and when this remained for sometime unpaid, sued them for it before Judge Kisby.

"A solicitor, Mr Smith, of Drogheda, appeared for the tenants, who, having given evidence of the facts concerning the ghost in question, asked leave to support their sworn testimony by that of several other people. This, however, was disallowed by the judge.

> "It was admitted by Miss Weir that nothing either on one side or the other had been said regarding the haunting when the house was let; yet that the rent was due and must be paid.
>
> "A judgment was consequently entered for the landlady although it had been shown indirectly that unquestionably the house had the reputation of being haunted, and that previous tenants had been much inconvenienced and affrighted."

Another case is chronicled which took place in Dublin in 1885. Dr Lee's account is confirmed by *The Evening Standard* of February 23rd of that year.

> "Mr Waldron, a solicitor, sued his next-door neighbour, one Kiernan, a mate in the merchant service, to recover £500 for damages done to his house. Kiernan altogether denied the charges, but asserted that Waldron's residence was notoriously haunted. Witnesses proved that every night from August 1884, to January 1885, stones were thrown at the windows and doors and other serious damage done—in fact that numerous extraordinary and inexplicable occurrences constantly took place.
>
> "Mrs Waldron, wife of the plaintiff, swore that one night she saw one of the panes of glass of a certain window cut through with a diamond, and a white hand inserted through the hole. She at once caught up a bill-hook and aimed a blow at the hand, cutting off one of the fingers. Neither this finger, however, could be found nor were any traces of blood seen.
>
> "A servant of hers was sorely persecuted by noises and the sound of footsteps. Mr Waldron, with the aid of detectives and policemen, endeavoured to find the cause, but with no avail. The witnesses in this case were closely cross-examined, but without shaking their testimony. The facts appeared to be proved, so the jury found for Kiernan, the defendant. At least twenty persons had testified on oath to the fact that the house had been known to have been haunted."

The possible agency of small boys in the matter of stone-throwing is apparently overlooked, while it can be easily imagined that a servant girl, well aware of the uncanny reputation of the house she lived in, would very

soon develop a capacity for hearing mysterious sounds and footsteps on the smallest provocation. Then again the testimony of the plaintiff's wife was surely very damaging to her own case since she was, presumably, endeavouring to prove that the whole of the "extraordinary and inexplicable occurrences" were due to some mad freak on the part of her neighbour.

On the whole I can find no class of occult phenomena of greater antiquity and persistence than that of haunting. Even though the ghost may not be as visible as that of Hamlet's father, yet the idea of a perturbed spirit revisiting its former haunts or the scene of its bodily murder finds credence amongst all peoples and epochs in the world's history. Fable is usually the dulled image of the truth: just as what we call presentiment or rumour is a kind of aura or van-wind of truth. On these grounds alone I should be inclined to take the legendary evidence for haunting seriously, just as every man who investigates its astonishing history now perceives that witchcraft is not to be dismissed as a mere groundless superstition. Indeed, I lay it down as a proposition that any belief which spontaneously and universally arises and persistently survives must have truth in the web of it. But the modern authentic testimony for haunting is so clear and strong and the attestors so clear-headed and indeed inexpugnable that we must really believe the physical sounds, with their revealed significance, actually occurred and do occur. Hallucination I put here out of the question. Neither will the theory of telepathy between the living serve to account for anything here.

There is some other solution of the mystery. Has it been propounded? We shall see. Cock Lane is not now to be dismissed derisively. Nor are these manifestations to be treated in the spirit of one of the characters in Mr Wells' "Love and Mr Lewisham"—"Even if it be true—it is all wrong."

CHAPTER VIII

THE DOWSING OR DIVINING ROD

No serious inquirer into the mysteries of occultism should neglect to study the peculiar human faculty locally known as Dowsing. Science has hitherto turned a cold shoulder to the skilled wielders of the divining rod, and at first sight perhaps few subjects appear to be so little worthy of investigation. To begin with it is a matter of common geological knowledge that the mode of distribution of underground water is very different from that imagined by the professional dowser. The latter will locate a spring in a certain spot and give you scrupulous details as to its depth and the amount of water it will yield. He may go on to tell you that a few feet distant is another spring, of a totally different depth, and that between the two no water will be found. The assertions are ridiculed by the practical geologist, whose point of view is admirably expressed in the following letter. The writer is the Rev. Osmond Fisher, M.A. (author of "Physics of the Earth's Crust").

"Harlton Rectory, Cambridge,

"February 4th, 1896.

"It appears to me that the assumption which underlies the belief in the divining rod is erroneous. It is only under exceptional circumstances, as among crystalline rocks, or where the strata are much disturbed, that underground water runs in channels like water in a pipe, so that a person can say, 'I am now standing over a spring,' whereas a few paces off he was not over one. What is called a spring, such as is reached in a well, is *usually* a widely extended water-saturated stratum. Ordinarily where water can be reached by a well, there are few spots [in the neighbourhood] where a well would not find it.

"The question which is really worthy of investigation in this and similar cases seems to be how such an idea ever originated and to what it owes its vitality."

From the geologist's point of view, then, the so-called "diviner" is the merest charlatan, who, so far as the finding of water or mineral veins is concerned, would be equally successful were he to substitute the dice-box or the coin for his more usual implement the hazel wand. It is, he argues, a matter of guessing—and nothing more. The question becomes complicated when we remember that among the ardent devotees of the "rod" are to be numbered country squires, M.P.'s, doctors, clergymen, and farmers, who would have nothing to gain by pretending to a power which they did not possess.

The Society for Psychical Research has devoted a considerable amount of attention to the subject. So far back as 1884 a paper on "The Divining Rod," prepared by Mr E. R. Pease, was read at a general meeting of the Society. The following is an abstract:—

> "The Divining Rod is a V-shaped twig, commonly of hazelwood, but sometimes of steel watchspring, whalebone and other substances. It first came into use about three centuries ago, and during the seventeenth century it was the subject of much controversy and of numerous experiments by the learned men of the time. Many theories were proposed to explain its action, but none of them would now be regarded as plausible, and various test experiments which were made uniformly failed. In 1701, the Inquisition condemned the use of the rod, and after this date the popularity of divining greatly diminished. In the seventeenth century it was used to discover murderers and thieves, buried treasures, lost boundaries, and other hidden objects, as well as metals and water springs. At present it appears to be chiefly used in the West of England for the discovery of water springs, and in America for oil wells and mines. Mr E. Vaughan Jenkins, of Cheltenham, has made and presented to the Society for Psychical Research a very valuable collection of evidence of its use in England for locating wells. He has communicated with various well-known 'diviners,' and has received direct from landowners, architects, builders, commercial firms and others, careful records of the successful choosing of well sites by diviners in places where professional geologists or local experts were hopeless of success. It seems also that diviners travel about the country and 'dowse' in localities new and strange to them.... The divining rod is always held in a position of extreme tension, and at the same time of unstable equilibrium. Slight muscular contractions produce violent and

> startling effects. It would seem therefore that the action of the rod may be caused by unconscious movements of the diviner's hands, due possibly to a sensation of chill on reaching water-bearing spots, or perhaps merely to an unwritten practical science of the surface signs of hidden water."

Mr Pease eventually came to the conclusion that "the evidence for the success of dowsing as a practical art is very strong—and there seems to be an unexplained residuum when all possible deductions have been made." Fifty years ago Dr Mayo, F.R.S., came to a similar conclusion after exhaustive experiments with the divining rod, both in England and abroad, and in 1883, Dr R. Raymond, the distinguished secretary of the American Institute of Mining Engineers, summed up the result of his investigations in the following opinion:—"That there is a residuum of scientific value, after making all necessary deductions for exaggeration, self-deception and fraud" in the use of the divining rod for finding springs and deposits of ore.

In 1892, Professor W. F. Barrett, yielding to the earnest request of the Council of the Society for Psychical Research, began an investigation of the matter. It was with considerable reluctance that Professor Barrett undertook the work, since, as he has told us, his own prejudice against the subject was not less than that of others. He hoped, however, that a few weeks' work would enable him to relegate it

> "Into a limbo large and broad, since called
> The Paradise of fools."

Six years later Professor Barrett presented to the Society a voluminous report, which occupies a considerable part of two volumes of the "Proceedings." Embodied in this Report, which is a veritable masterpiece of patient and indefatigable research, is a mass of evidence so vast that it is only possible to pick out a case here and there at random.

The following case was sent by Miss Grantham:—

"100 Eaton Square, London, S.W.,

"February 1st, 1893.

"My father (Judge Grantham) was going to dig a well on one of his farms. The Rev. J. Blunt was then residing in our parish, and as he had previously told us he was able to discover the presence of water underground by means of a twig, we asked him to go with us one day to see if he could find water. Mr B. began by cutting a twig out of the hedge, of hazel or blackthorn, V-shaped, each side about eight inches long, then taking hold of one end in each hand between the thumb and first finger, and pointing the angle to the ground, he walked about the field in which my father proposed digging a well, and at two spots the point of the twig turned right up, exactly reversing its previous position; in fact so strong was its impulse to point upwards, that we found that unless Mr B. relaxed his hold the twig broke off near his fingers. We put small sticks in these spots, and then took a boy about twelve years old who was in Mr B.'s employment, and who had since quite a child shown that he possessed this power, over the same ground; he had not seen the spots at which Mr B.'s twig found water, neither did we point them out to him, but at these places his twig behaved in the same way as Mr B.'s. My father, mother, and four or five others, then cut similar twigs out of the hedge, but with none of us would they divine water. My father then took Mr B. over some ground where he knew of the existence of an underground stream; he did not tell Mr B. this, but directly Mr B. passed over the places the twig again turned upwards as it had done before. A well has since been dug at one of the spots in the first field where the twig indicated water, and it was found at the depth of fifteen feet. Mr B. and the boy both said that they did not feel any abnormal influence whatever when the twig divined water.

"EMMA L. GRANTHAM."

Another case (from Somersetshire) is quoted from in *The Western Gazette* of 10th February 1893. Evercreech is at the foot of the Mendips.

"A well has recently been sunk on the premises of Messrs W. Roles & Son, of Evercreech Junction, on the site of the proposed milk factory. Mr Henry Smart, head gardener at Pennard House, was successful with the divining twig (or rod), and a well was sunk to a depth of 60 feet, when a spring was found which yielded no less than 15,000 gallons of water in ten hours. Water came at such a rate that a powerful pump had

to be erected temporarily by Messrs Hill & Son, of Bruton, and was kept working day and night in order to keep the water down for the purpose of walling (the well). At the present time there is 50 feet of water in the well, the supply increasing daily."

Professor Barrett wrote to Messrs Roles to know if a well had been sunk previously, and if the above statement was correct. They reply that the account is quite correct, and add: "We had previously sunk a well without the use of the rod, to nearly the same depth, but it was *unsuccessful*. Six yards from this useless well the diviner found the spring which now yields enough to supply a small village if required."

The Rev. Martin R. Knapp, M.A., vicar of Holy Trinity, Dalston, writes to Professor Barrett as follows:—

"72 Forest Road, Dalston, N.E.,

"November 14th, 1896.

"In the summer of 1892, I entered on the vicarage of North Wootton in North Somerset, and had reason at once to look for water. I was advised to try a 'water-finder,' and did so. The dowser was a retired miller, and came provided with a number of forked twigs. Holding one he traversed the place, and at certain points the twig oscillated violently in his hands, and there, he professed, he should find water.

"There was an interesting sidelight in the matter that I will tell you of. My builder, who came from Bath, was very sceptical about the whole thing. Three or four of us who were on the spot tried to see if the twigs would 'play up' with us.

"We were unsuccessful till this man tried his hand, scoffing the while. But directly that he came to the spots the dowser had found the twig showed vigorous signs of animation. When his hand was being twisted in his efforts to keep the twig steady, I cried to him to hold fast, with the result that the twig twisted itself into two pieces.

"At Wells, close by, lived a coachman, who was reported to have the power to find, not only water but minerals. He carries neither rod nor

twig, and told me when I inquired, that his sensations are undoubted and extraordinary whenever he is directly above either water or minerals.

"MARTIN R. KNAPP."

In answer to inquiries Mr Knapp informed Professor Barrett the builder was a stranger to the locality, and the spots where the rod moved were unlikely to suggest water below. The twig in the builder's hand, Mr Knapp says, in every case corroborated the dowser's indications, and hence he (the builder) was unmercifully chaffed, as he had treated the whole thing with such contempt. Mr Knapp says it is possible that the places indicated by the dowser might have been perceived by the builder, but it was the spontaneous and vigorous movement of the twig, evidently contrary to the holder's intention and against his will, that excited their astonishment.

Dr Hutton, F.R.S., the distinguished mathematician—to whom the Royal Society entrusted the gigantic labour of making an abridgment of the whole of the Transactions of the Royal Society from its foundation in 1666 to the beginning of this century—gives the following account of his experiments with the divining rod as used by Lady Milbanke:—

"At the time appointed (eleven A.M., 30th May 1806) the lady, with all her family, arrived at my house on Woolwich Common, where, after preparing the rods, etc., they walked to the grounds, accompanied by the individuals of my own family and some friends, when Lady Milbanke showed the experiment several times in different places, holding the rod in the manner described elsewhere. In the places where I had good reason to know that no water was to be found the rod was always quiescent, but in other places, where I knew there was water below the surface, the rods turned slowly and regularly in the manner above described, till the twigs twisted themselves off below the fingers, which are considerably indented by so forcibly holding the rod between them. [3]

"All the company stood close to Lady M. with all eyes intensely fixed on her hands and the rods to watch if any particular motion might be made by the fingers, but in vain; nothing of the kind was perceived, and all the company could observe no cause or reason why the rods should move in the manner they were seen to do.

> "After the experiments were ended, everyone of the company tried the rods in the same manner as they saw Lady M. had done, but without the least motion from any of them. And in my family, among ourselves, we have since then, several times, tried if we could possibly cause the rod to turn by means of any trick or twisting of the fingers, held in the manner Lady Milbanke did, but in vain; we had no power to accomplish it."

The following is a remarkable case, and an important one from an evidential point of view. It is not known whether the "diviner" in this case was an amateur or not; he is now dead.

The Bristol Times and Mirror of 16th June 1891 states:

> "The Anglo-Bavarian Brewery at Shepton Mallet needed a large water supply; accordingly excavations had been made to find water, but without success. About two years since, during an exceptionally dry season, it became absolutely necessary to obtain a further supply of brewing water; hence several boring experiments were made on the property. At the suggestion of a gentleman in the locality, the services of a 'diviner' were obtained, and although the principal members of the firm professed to have no faith in his 'art,' yet he was allowed to try the fields on the company's property, and those on the neighbouring estate, and discovered the well now used by the brewery.... The soothsayer who carried the divining rod, a hazel branch, was Mr Charles Sims, a local farmer, and a notable discoverer of wells in the district. Operations were immediately commenced, and, after excavating and dynamiting through the rock, to the depth of fifty feet, a magnificent spring was discovered in a fault of the rock, which proved to be of exceptionally fine water, and of even a finer quality than the town's supply."

Professor Barrett wrote to the Secretary of the brewery to make inquiries and he replied as follows:—

> "Shepton Mallet, Somersetshire,
>
> "September 12th, 1896.
>
> "Replying to your letter in regard to a local diviner, we had one of the

name of Sims, from Pilton, who successfully denoted a spot on our ground where we have had an abundant supply of water since. This was some eight years ago.

"The writer of this letter also has had some considerable experience with Mr Lawrence of Bristol, who was one of the most noted divining rod men in the West of England. He also was successful in denoting a supply for a Bristol brewery with which the writer was connected; and in numerous other instances in the neighbourhood. Mr Lawrence bore a very high reputation. We believe he died a few months ago at a ripe old age.

"The Anglo-Bavarian Brewery Ltd.,

"J. CLIFFORD,

"*Manager*."

Having written to ask if a previous boring had been made, and if so, what depth, and with what result, the following reply was received:—

"Shepton Mallet, Somersetshire,

"September 18th, 1896.

"Replying to yours of the 14th, a boring was carried out to the extent of some 140 feet *without success* on another portion of our premises, before it was successfully done at the spot indicated by the water finder; here, a well was sunk and abundant water obtained at a depth of 40 feet.

"The Anglo-Bavarian Brewery Ltd.,

"J. CLIFFORD,

"*Manager*."

In the following case, the best advice was obtained and some £1000 spent fruitlessly searching for an underground spring prior to the dowser's visit. The first notice of it appeared in a local newspaper, *The West Sussex Times and Sussex Standard*, from which the following letter is reprinted:—

"Warnham Lodge, Horsham,

"January 3rd, 1893.

"Having had very great difficulty in the supply of water to this house, I sent for John Mullins, of Colerne, near Chippenham, who, by the aid of a twig of hazel, pointed out several places where water could be found. I have sunk wells in four of the places and it each case have been most successful.

"It may be said that water can be found anywhere—this is not my experience. I have had the best engineering advice and have spent many hundreds of pounds, and hitherto have not obtained sufficient water for my requirements, but now I have an abundant supply.

"I certainly should not think of sinking another well without previously consulting John Mullins.

"HENRY HARDEN."

It is sometimes urged that only springs yielding a limited supply of water are found by dowsers, who fix on spots where more or less surface water can be got from shallow wells rather than run the risk of sinking a deep well. Many of the cases already cited refute this notion, and the following bears on the same point. It is from Messrs Beamish & Crawford, the well-known brewers, of Cork.

"Cork Porter Brewery, Cork,

"December 30th, 1896.

"In reply to your letter of 26th inst., we beg to state:

"1. We had an old well yielding a small supply of water. It was about 30 feet deep.

"2. No new well was fixed on by Mullins. He bored down to a depth of about 60 feet below the bottom of the old well, and therefore about 90 feet below the surface of the ground.

"3. The supply of water now obtained from the new pipes sunk by

Mullins is, as nearly as we can estimate, about 10,000 gallons per hour.

"BEAMISH & CRAWFORD LTD."

It goes without saying that professional dowsers are not always successful in their quests. "I am inclined," states Professor Barrett, "to think we may take from ten to fifteen per cent. as the average percentage of failures which occur with most English dowsers of to-day, allowing a larger percentage for partial failures, meaning by this that the quantity of water estimated and the depth at which it is found have not realised the estimate formed by the dowser."

What then is the secret of the dowser's often remarkable success? The question is whether, after making every allowance for shrewdness of eye, chance, coincidence, and local geological knowledge, the dowser has any instinctive or supernormal power of discovering the presence of underground water. Professor Barrett, who has perhaps devoted more time to the subject than any other man living, is inclined to answer in the affirmative.

"There appears to be evidence," he writes, "that a more profound stratum of our personality, glimpses of which we get elsewhere in our 'Proceedings,' is associated with the dowser's art; and the latter seems to afford a further striking instance of information obtained through automatic means being more remarkable than, and beyond the reach of, that derived from conscious observation and inference."

In another passage he adds:

"For my own part, I have been driven to believe that some dowsers—

> "Whose exterior semblance doth belie
> The soul's immensity"

nevertheless give us a glimpse of

> "The eternal deep
> Haunted for ever by the eternal mind."

CHAPTER IX

MEDIUMISTIC PHENOMENA

In my inquiry so far the reader will note that I have taken one thing for granted—the fact of telepathy. In order to convince him to the extent to which this great scientific truth has convinced me, it would be necessary for me to lead him through a thousand pages of evidence for telepathic phenomena, attested by some of the leading physicists of the day. I am aware that there are still sceptics on the subject of telepathy, but the testimony is overwhelming, and every year sees the ranks of scepticism growing thinner.

Not many years ago a very learned man, the late Professor von Helmholtz, although confronted with *prima-facie* evidence of thought transference or telepathy, declared: "I cannot believe it. Neither the testimony of all the Fellows of the Royal Society, nor even the evidence of my own senses, would lead me to believe in the transmission of them from one person to another. It is clearly impossible." An opinion in these terms is very rare to-day. We are apt to express our incredulity in language far more guarded and less emphatic.

About hallucinations, however, there is no scepticism. We have remarked sensory hallucinations of an occasional nature; we now come to regard them as a cult, for I suppose there is no manifestation in the world, no gift, no prodigy even, that is not prone to the fate of being exploited for particular ends.

A poet, we will say, by some rare "subliminal uprush," produces a beautiful poem. He is at once chained to his desk by publishers and compelled to go on producing poetry for the rest of his life. It is inevitable that many of his manifestations will be false; and for that reason, in spite of an occasional jewel of truth, he runs serious risks of being denounced in the end as no poet.

I have no doubt it is the same with the producers or the agents of occult phenomena. Sensory hallucinations may be stimulated. They may be stimulated by intoxication and disease, or they may be stimulated by the

morbid conditions of a spiritualistic *séance*. Everything in these conditions—the prolonged darkness, the emotional expectancy—promotes the peculiar frame of mind apparently requisite. Constant exercise—perpetual aspiration develops the power of seeing visions. After a time, in well-known cases, they appear to need no inducement to come spontaneously.

One well-known medium, Mr Hill Tout, confesses that building and peopling *chateaux en Espagne* was a favourite occupation of his in his earlier days. This long-practised faculty is doubtless a potent factor in all his characterisations, and probably also in those of many another full-fledged medium.

Hallucinations need not be visual only; they are frequently auditory. Miss Freer gives an account of one induced by merely holding a shell to the ear. There is another case of a young woman in whom auditory hallucinations would be excited on hearing the sound of water running through a tap. Given the basis of actual sound, the hallucinable person quickly causes it to become articulate and intelligible. Thus, is it unreasonable to suppose that the vague, nebulous lights seen at dark *séances* would furnish the raw material, so to speak, for sense deception?

Thus, we have the basis and beginning, from one point of view, of modern spiritualism. But before we examine the question of clairvoyance or trance utterances of spiritualistic mediums we must first of all go into the subject of physical phenomena.

So-called physical phenomena are a comparatively modern excrescence on the main growth. It is only within the last half-century that they have attained any considerable development. The faith in the communion and intervention of spirits originated before their appearance and will probably outlast their final discredit. At the best, whatever effect they may have had in advertising the movement with the vulgar, they seem to have exerted only a subsidiary influence in inducing belief with more thoughtful men and women.

These physical phenomena consist chiefly of table rapping, table moving, ringing of bells, and various other manifestations for which a normal cause is

not apparent. For a long time, in the early days of modern spiritualism, the cult was chiefly confined to "miracles" of this sort. One of its most notable props was the manifestations, long continued and observed by many thousands, of the famous Daniel Dunglas Home. It is fifty years ago now since Home came to England and began his *séances*, which were attended by Lord Dunraven, Lord Brougham, Sir D. Brewster, Robert Owen, Bulwer Lytton, T. A. Trollope, Garth Wilkinson, and others. For thirty years Home was brought before the public as a medium, dying in 1886. He seems to have been an amiable, highly emotional man, full of generous impulses, and of considerable personal charm. His frankness and sincerity impressed all those who came in touch with the man. Mr Andrew Lang has called him "a Harold Skimpole, with the gift of divination."

Home dealt with both clairvoyance and physical manifestations. Ostensibly through him came an enormous number of messages purporting to proceed from the dead friends of certain of those attending the *séances*. In the records of these *séances* will be found the signed statements of Dr Garth Wilkinson, Dr Gully, Mr and Mrs S. C. Hall, the present Earl of Dunraven, Earl of Crawford, Dr Hawksley, Mrs Nassau Senior, Mr P. P. Alexander, Mr Perdicaris, and others, that they had received messages giving details of a private nature that it seemed in the last degree probable could be known to the medium. Home's manifestations were for the most part those which any attendant at a spiritualistic *séance* can witness for himself to-day. The room he used was, compared with those used by other mediums who insisted on complete darkness, well lighted, as he had a shaded lamp, a gas-burner, or one or two candles lighted. The manifestations generally began with raps; then followed a quivering movement of the table, which one present described as like "the vibration on a small steamer when the engines begin to work"; by another as "a ship in distress, with its timbers straining in a heavy sea." Then, suspended in the air, the table would float, and in its shelter musical instruments performing could be heard; the sitters could feel their knees being clasped and their dresses pulled; many things would be handed about the circle, such as handkerchiefs, flowers, and even heavy bells. During the performance messages were rapped out by the spirits, or delivered through the mouth of the medium. In this respect, where intelligence is shown, they would partake of the nature of trance utterance, a thing to be analysed later.

Robert Bell, a dramatist and critic, having been present at one of these *séances*, acknowledged that he had seen things which he was satisfied were "beyond the pale of material experiences." After describing various manifestations, hands felt under the table, touching the knees, and pulling the clothes, bells rung by invisible agency, and various articles thrown about the room, he proceeds to describe "levitation":

> "Mr Home was seated next the window. Through the semi-darkness his head was dimly visible against the curtains, and his hands might be seen in a faint white heap before him. Presently he said, in a quiet voice, 'My chair is moving—I am off the ground—don't notice me—talk of something else,' or words to that effect. It was very difficult to restrain the curiosity, not unmixed with a more serious feeling, which these few words awakened; but we talked, incoherently enough, upon some different topic. I was sitting nearly opposite Mr Home, and I saw his hands disappear from the table, and his head vanish into the deep shadow beyond. In a moment or two more he spoke again. This time his voice was in the air above our heads. He had risen from his chair to a height of four or five feet from the ground. As he ascended higher he described his position, which at first was perpendicular, and afterwards became horizontal. He said he felt as if he had been turned in the gentlest manner, as a child is turned in the arms of a nurse. In a moment or two more he told us that he was going to pass across the window, against the grey, silvery light of which he would be visible. We watched in profound stillness, and saw his figure pass from one side of the window to the other, feet foremost, lying horizontally in the air. He spoke to us as he passed, and told us that he would turn the reverse way and recross the window, which he did. His own tranquil confidence in the safety of what seemed from below a situation of the most novel peril gave confidence to everybody else; but with the strongest nerves it was impossible not to be conscious of a certain sensation of fear or awe. He hovered round the circle for several minutes, and passed, this time perpendicularly, over our heads. I heard his voice behind me in the air, and felt something lightly brush my chair. It was his foot, which he gave me leave to touch. Turning to the spot where it was on the top of the

> chair, I placed my hand gently upon it, when he uttered a cry of pain, and the foot was withdrawn quickly, with a palpable shudder. It was evidently not resting on the chair, but floating; and it sprang from the touch as a bird would. He now passed over to the farthest extremity of the room, and we could judge by his voice of the altitude and distance he had attained. He had reached the ceiling, upon which he made a slight mark, and soon afterwards descended and resumed his place at the table. An incident which occurred during this aerial passage, and imparted a strange solemnity to it, was that the accordion, which we supposed to be on the ground under the window close to us, played a strain of wild pathos in the air from the distant corner of the room."

A well-known physician, Dr Gully, who was present at this *séance*, wrote confirming the account in *The Cornhill Magazine* given by the above writer.

During the ensuing forty years mediumistic performances became of common and almost daily occurrence in this country. Two or three forms of so-called spirit manifestation—such as materialisation, spirit photography, and slate-writing—afterwards became connected with many of the *séances*. But first the manifestations in daylight consisted of raps and tiltings of a table; afterwards, when the lights were turned out or turned very low, spirit voices, touches of spirit hands, spirit lights, spirit-born flowers, floating musical instruments, and moving about or levitation of the furniture.

Until Sir William Crookes began to investigate the alleged spiritualistic phenomena, all investigation had been undertaken by persons without scientific training. After a year of experiments he issued a detailed description of those conducted in his own laboratory in the presence of four other persons, two of whom, Sir William Huggins and Sergeant Fox, confirmed the accuracy of his report. The result was that he was able to demonstrate, he said, the existence of a hitherto unknown force, and had measured the effect produced. At all events, these inquirers were convinced of the genuineness of Home's powers.

Suppose we glance at the possible alternative—viz. that Home was a conjurer of consummate skill and ingenuity. For one of the physical phenomena, that of tilting a table at a precarious angle without displacing various small objects resting on its polished surface, Mr Podmore suggests an explanation. He

thinks that the articles were probably held in position on the table when it was tilted by means of hairs and fine threads attached to Home's dress. He has various explanations for other of the phenomena, but he confesses that there remain a few manifestations which the hypothesis of simple trickery does not seem to fit. In going over a mass of evidence relating to Home, the hypothesis of conjuring seems to be rather incredible; when one bears in mind Home's long career as a medium, how his private life was watched by the lynx-eyed sceptics, eager to pounce upon the evidence of trickery, and that he was never detected, it certainly seems to me, at all events, that Home's immunity from exposure is strong evidence against the assumption of fraud. Home was merely the type of a large class of mediums purporting to be controlled by spirit power, whose *séances* are a feature of modern life.

Certain experiments of Sir William Crookes with Home came very near to satisfying the most stringent scientific conditions, especially those in the alteration in the weight of a board. In these experiments one end of the board was on a spring balance and the other rested on a table. The board became heavier or lighter as Home placed his fingers on the end resting on the table and "willed" it, and the different weights were recorded by an automatic register. This effect might have been produced, says Mr Podmore, by using a dark thread with a loop attached to some part of the apparatus—possibly the hook of the spring balance—and the ends fastened to Home's trousers. But this particular trick does not seem to have occurred to those experimenting, and the description of the *séances* does not exclude it.

Suggesting an explanation of an event does not prove that it so occurred, and Mr Podmore adds: "It is not easy to see how the investigators ... could have been deceived, and repeatedly deceived, by any device of the kind suggested."

One of the most remarkable of Daniel Dunglas Home's manifestations occurred on 16th December 1868, at 5 Buckingham Gate, London. There were present the Master of Lindsay (now the Earl of Crawford), Viscount Adare (the present Earl of Dunraven), and Captain Wynne. The Master of Lindsay has recorded the circumstances, as follows:—

> "I was sitting with Mr Home and Lord Adare and a cousin of his. During the sitting Mr Home went into a trance, and in that state was carried out

of the window in the room next to where we were, and was brought in at our window. The distance between the windows was about seven feet six inches, and there was not the slightest foothold between them, nor was there more than a twelve-inch projection to each window, which served as a ledge to put flowers on. We heard the window in the next room lifted up, and almost immediately after we saw Home floating in air outside our window. The moon was shining full into the room; my back was to the light, and I saw the shadow on the wall of the window-sill, and Home's feet about six inches above it. He remained in this position for a few seconds, then raised the window and glided into the room feet foremost and sat down."

Here is Lord Adare's account of the central incident:

> "We heard Home go into the next room, heard the window thrown up, and presently Home appeared standing upright outside our window; he opened the window and walked in quite coolly."

Captain Wynne, writing to Home in 1877, refers to this occasion in the following words:

> "The fact of your having gone out of the one window and in at the other I can swear to."

It is surely not a little remarkable that an occurrence of so extraordinary a nature should be testified to by three such clear-headed men as Captain Wynne and Lords Lindsay and Adare. To cross from one window to another by ordinary means was clearly impossible, and it would be a brave conjurer indeed who would essay such a feat at a distance of eighty-five feet from the ground. What then is the explanation? Mr Podmore suggests that the three witnesses were the victims of a collective hallucination; but this theory is not easy to accept, and Mr Andrew Lang has heaped it with ridicule. "There are," he writes, "two other points to be urged against Mr Podmore's theory that observers of Home were hallucinated. The Society's records contain plenty of 'collective, so-called telepathic hallucinations.' But surely these hallucinations offered visionary figures of persons and things not present in fact. Has Mr Podmore one case, except Home's, of a collective hallucination in which a person actually present is the hallucination; floats in the air, holds red-hot coals and so forth—appears outside of the window, for instance, when he is inside the room? Of course, where conjuring is barred. Again, Home's marvels are attested by witnesses violently prejudiced against him, and (far from being attentively expectant) most anxious to detect and expose him."

If the case of Home presents difficulties to the rational sceptic, that of William Stainton Moses, who died in 1892, presents an even harder problem. I will refer to Moses later when we come to discuss clairvoyance, but at first his mediumistic powers were manifested in physical phenomena. He was a clergyman and a scholar, an M.A. of Oxford, and for nearly eighteen years English master in University College School. He was held in esteem and even

affection by all who were most intimately associated with him. Yet Moses was responsible for table rapping, levitation of furniture, playing of musical instruments and "apports"—the latter term expressing the movement or introduction of various articles either by the request of the sitters or spontaneously, such as books, stones, shells, opera-glasses, candle-sticks, and so forth. All this began in 1872, and the phenomena observed at the various *séances* were carefully recorded by the medium's friends, Dr and Mrs Speer, C. T. Speer, and F. W. Percival. It must be borne in mind that Moses was in his thirty-third year before he suspected mediumistic powers. There have been any number of hypotheses to account for the physical phenomena furnished at these *séances*. Jewels, cameos, seed pearls, and other precious things were brought and given to the sitters. Scent was introduced; familiar perfumes—such as sandalwood, jasmine, heliotrope, not always recognised—were a frequent occurrence at these *séances*. Occasionally it would be sprayed in the air, sometimes poured into the hands of the sitters, and often it was found oozing from the medium's head and even running down.

In Mrs Speer's diary for 30th August there is the following record:—

> "Many things were brought from different parts of the house through the locked door this evening. Mr S. M. was levitated, and when he felt for his feet they were hanging in mid-air, while his head must have almost touched the ceiling."

Dr Speer also records a "levitation" on 3rd December:

> "Mr M. was floated about, and a large dining-room chair was placed on the table."

Mrs Speer tells us that they sat in the fire-light, and that the *séances* were held in more or less complete darkness. Moses' own account of the levitation is much fuller. He says that he was fully conscious that he was floating about the room, and that he marked a place on the wall with a pencil, which was afterwards found to be more than six feet from the floor. Subsequently musical sounds became a feature of the manifestations. In September 1874 Mrs Speer gives a list of them, mentioning ten or more different kinds, including the tambourine, harp, fairy-bells, and many stringed instruments, and ascribes their production to eight different spirits.

In the early materialisations of Stainton Moses we find that hands, and occasionally the fore arm, were seen holding lights. These spirit lights are described as hard, round, and cold to the touch. In his description of one incident at a *séance* Moses himself pens a significant passage, which seems to confirm the suspicion that the spirit lights were really bottles of phosphorised oil:

> "Suddenly there arose from below me, apparently under the table, or near the floor, right under my nose, a cloud of luminous smoke, just like phosphorus. It fumed up in great clouds, until I seemed to be on fire, and rushed from the room in a panic. I was fairly frightened, and could not tell what was happening. I rushed to the door and opened it, and so to the front door. My hands seemed to be ablaze, and left their impress on the door and handles. It blazed for a while after I had touched it, but soon went out, and no smell or trace remained.... There seemed to be no end of smoke. It smelt distinctly phosphoric, but the smell evaporated as soon as I got out of the room into the air."

Such candour disarms us: can there be any ground for the theory that here was a case of self-deception on a large scale? Or is there yet an alternative explanation? Perhaps we shall discover one.

CHAPTER X

MORE PHYSICAL PHENOMENA

What we have to remember is that by far the greater part of the physical phenomena which is said to occur at a *séance* is really nothing extraordinary. All physical occurrences are normal that are capable of being produced by a clever conjurer; and there is no doubt that with due preparation such a one could achieve table rapping, introduce flowers and move furniture. But the problem is, how, under the stringent conditions imposed, and in the face of the close scrutiny, to which these manifestations are subjected, they can be done. As Sir Oliver Lodge says: "I am disposed to maintain that I have myself witnessed, in a dim light, occasional abnormal instances of movement of untouched objects." He goes on to say that "suppose an untouched object comes sailing or hurtling through the air, or suppose an object is raised or floated from the ground, how are we to regard it? This is just what a live animal could do, and so the first natural hypothesis is that some living thing is doing it: (*a*) the medium himself, acting by tricks or concealed mechanism; (*b*) a confederate—an unconscious confederate perhaps, among the sitters; (*c*) an unknown and invisible live entity, other than the people present. If in any such action the extraordinary laws of nature were superseded, if the weight of a piece of matter could be shown to have *disappeared,* or if fresh energy were introduced beyond the recognised categories of energy, then there would be no additional difficulties; but hitherto there has been no attempt to establish either of these things. Indeed, it must be admitted that insufficient attention is usually paid to this aspect of ordinary, commonplace, abnormal physical phenomena. If a heavy body is raised under good conditions, we should always try to ascertain" (he does not say that it is easy to ascertain) "where its weight has gone to—that is to say, what supports it—what ultimately supports it. For instance, if experiments were conducted in a suspended room, would the whole weight of that room, as ascertained by outside balance, remain unaltered when a table or person was levitated inside it? Or, could the agencies operating inside affect the bodies outside?—questions, these, which appear capable of answer, with sufficient trouble, in an organised physical

laboratory; such a laboratory as does not, he supposes, yet exist, but which might exist and which will exist in the future, if the physical aspect of experimental psychology is ever to become recognised as a branch of orthodox physics."

Recently, Dr Maxwell, of Paris, published his researches and observations on physical phenomena, and he states that under "material and physical phenomena" are comprised (1) raps; (2) movements of objects (*a*) without contact, or (*b*) only with such contact as is insufficient to effect the particular movement in question; (3) "apports"—*i.e.* the production of objects by some supernormal agency; (4) visual phenomena—*i.e.* the appearance of lights and of forms, luminous or otherwise, including among the latter the class of alleged phenomena known as materialisations, and (5) phenomena leaving some permanent trace, such as imprints or "direct" writings or drawings, etc. Under the class of "intellectual phenomena" may be included such occurrences as automatic writing, table tilting, etc.

As regards raps Dr Maxwell hazards certain conclusions, of which he says the most certain is the close connection of the raps with the muscular movements on the part of the sitters. Every muscular movement, even a slight one, appears to be followed by a rap. Thus if, without anyone necessarily touching the table, one of the sitters frees his hand from the chain made round the table by others, moves it about in a circle over the surface of the table, then raises it in the centre and brings it down towards the table, stopping suddenly within a few inches of it, a rap will be produced on the table corresponding with the sudden stoppage of the hand. Similarly, a rap will be produced by a pressure of the foot on the floor, by speaking, by blowing slightly, or by touching the medium or one of the sitters. Raps produced in this way by the sitters are often stronger than those produced by the medium himself. Dr Maxwell suggests as a working hypothesis that there is a certain accumulated force, and that if its equilibrium be suddenly disturbed by the addition of the excess of energy required for the movement, a discharge takes place producing the effect.

Dr Maxwell has made a series of experiments with Eusapia Paladino.

> "It was about five o'clock in the evening," he writes, "and there was broad daylight in the drawing-room at l'Aguélas. We were standing

> around the table. Eusapia took the hand of one of our number and rested it on the right-hand corner of the table. The table was raised to the level of our foreheads—that is, the top reached a height of at least four and three-quarter feet from the floor.... It was impossible for Eusapia to have lifted the table by normal means. One has but to consider that she touched but the corner of the table to realise what the weight must have been had she accomplished the feat by muscular effort. Further, she never had sufficient hold of it. It was clearly impossible for her, under the conditions of the experiment, to have used any of the means suggested by her critics—straps, or hooks of some kind."

Most of the phenomena discussed by Dr Maxwell were obtained through the mediumship of Eusapia Paladino. He was a member of the committee which met in 1896 to investigate this medium, who had just concluded the series of performances held under the auspices of the society at Cambridge, which were entirely unfavourable to her claims. The French committee was made aware of the fraudulent devices which the Cambridge investigators claimed to have discovered. He recommends all who believe that Dr Hodgson and his Cambridge colleagues have had the last word in the controversy to read the report which will be found in the *Annales des Psychiques*, for 1896. The English sitters arrive at conclusions in direct conflict with those of the French, who claim that they had long known of the tricks "discovered" at Cambridge, and in consequence took means to guard against them. Dr Maxwell indicts the Cambridge way of controlling the medium, which he says consisted, for a time at least, in affording the medium opportunities to cheat to see if she would avail herself of them. Opportunities of which she took the fullest advantage.

Nevertheless, Dr Maxwell offers but little encouragement for the theory of spiritualistic agency. "I believe," he says, "in the reality of certain phenomena, of which I have repeatedly been a witness. I do not consider it necessary to attribute them to a supernatural intervention of any kind, but am disposed to think that they are produced by some force existing within ourselves."

In the same way as certain psychical phenomena, such as automatic writing, trance, "controls," crystal vision, and so forth, in which an intelligence seems to be present independent of the intelligence of the medium, can be shown

beyond dispute to be merely manifestations of his subliminal intelligence, frequently taking the form of a dramatic personification; so may the agency, revealing itself in raps, movements of objects, and other phenomena of a physical character, perhaps be traceable, not to any power external to the medium and the sitters, but merely to a force latent within themselves, and may be an exteriorisation in a dynamic form, in a way not yet ascertained, of their collective subliminal capacities.

However strange new and unknown facts may be, we need not fear they are going to destroy the truth of the old ones. Would the science of physics be overthrown if, for example, we admit the phenomenon of "raps"—*i.e.* audible vibrations in wood and other substances—is a real phenomenon, and that in certain cases there may be blows which cannot be explained by any mechanical force known to us? It would be a new force exercised on matter, but none the less would the old forces preserve their activity. Pressure, temperature, and the density of air or of wood might still exercise their usual influence, and it is even likely that the transmission of vibrations by this new force would follow the same laws as other vibrations.

In the opinion of the leading members of this society, some of the physical phenomena which have been adduced as among those proclaimed to have occurred, such as "apports," scent, movement of objects, passage of matter through matter, bear a perilous resemblance to conjuring tricks, of a kind fairly well known; which tricks if well done can be very deceptive. Hence extreme caution is necessary, and full control must be allowed to the observers—a thing which conjurers never really allow. Sir Oliver Lodge says that he has never seen a silent and genuinely controlled conjurer; and in so far as mediums find it necessary to insist on their own conditions, so far they must be content to be treated as conjurers. For instance, no self-registering thermometer has ever recorded the "intense cold" felt at a *séance*. Flowers and fruit have made their appearance in closed rooms, but no arsenic has penetrated the walls of the hermetically sealed tube. Various investigators have smelt, seen, and handled curious objects, but no trace has been preserved. We have to depend on the recollection of the observer's passing glimpse of spirit lights, of the hearing of the rustle of spirit garments, the touch, in the dark, of unknown bodies. Exquisite scents, strange draperies, human forms have appeared seemingly out of nothing, and have returned whence they came unrecorded by photography, unweighed, unanalysed.

Briefly, then, the result of my carefully formed judgment is that a large part of the physical phenomena heard, seen, felt at the average spiritualistic *séance* must be placed on a level with ordinary conjuring. To return to the recent case of Eusapia Paladino. A number of English scientists, interested in the reports of her *séances*, induced her to come to England and repeat them at Cambridge. Every effort was made to make the experiments as satisfactory as possible. They used netting for confining the medium or separating her from objects which they hoped would move without contact; different ways of tying her were tried; also sufficient light was used in the *séance* room. She refused to submit to any of these conditions. The investigators pressed her at each sitting to allow some light in the room, and they long persevered in making the control in every case as complete as she would allow it to be. She permitted a very faint light usually at the beginning, but before long she insisted on complete darkness, and until the lights were extinguished the touches were never felt. The sitters then held the medium, the only method of control allowed, as firmly and continuously as possible. This she resisted, and then every form of persuasion was used, short of physical force, to induce her to submit. But she was allowed to take her own way without remonstrance when the sitters were convinced of the constant fraud practised.

It is only fair to state that recent experiments on the Continent have convinced a number of leading scientists of the genuineness of Eusapia Paladino's powers, and the conclusions arrived at by the Cambridge investigators are condemned as hasty and premature.

But, even of the other class, those who have lent themselves to the conditions of the investigator, while admitting the bona-fides of the medium, we are by no means prepared to regard them as necessarily the result of the action of disembodied spirits. Nor do many leading spiritualists themselves.

For, as we have just seen, there is still another explanation for supernormal physical movements. May there not be an unknown, or at least an unrecognised, extension of human muscular faculty? Such a hypothesis is no more extravagant than would have been the hypothesis of the Hertzian waves or a prediction of wireless telegraphy a few short years ago.

This is not all. We must remember that there is a mass of phenomena which cannot lightly be explained away by glib references to unknown extensions of

muscular faculty. Of such is the fire ordeal, one of the most inexplicable and best attested of the manifestations presented by Daniel Dunglas Home. The evidence is abundant and of high quality, the witnesses of undoubted integrity, and, from the nature of the experiment, the illuminations of the room were generally more adequate than in the case of the levitations and elongations. On one occasion, Home thrust his hand into the fire, and bringing out a red-hot cinder laid it upon a pocket-handkerchief. When at the end of half-a-minute it was removed, the handkerchief was quite free from any traces of burning.

Not content with handling glowing embers himself, Home would hand them on to others present at the *séance*, who were generally able to receive them with impunity. This effectually disposes of the theory formulated by an ingenious critic that Home was in the custom of covering his hands with some fire-proof preparation as yet unknown to science! Even if Home possessed and used such a preparation he would find considerable difficulty in transferring it to the hands of his spectators.

Here is an account of a *séance* which took place on the 9th May 1871. After various manifestations, two out of the four candles in the room were extinguished. Home went to the fire, took out a piece of red-hot charcoal, and placed it on a folded cambric pocket-handkerchief which he borrowed for the purpose from one of the guests. He fanned the charcoal to white heat with his breath, but the handkerchief was only burnt in one small hole. Mr Crookes, who was present at the *séance*, tested the handkerchief afterwards in his laboratory and found that it had not been chemically prepared to resist the action of fire.

After this exhibition—

> "Mr Home again went to the fire, and, after stirring the hot coal about with his hand, took out a red-hot piece nearly as big as an orange, and putting it on his right hand, so as almost completely to enclose it, and then blew into the small furnace thus extemporised until the lump of charcoal was nearly white hot, and then drew my attention to the lambent flame which was flickering over the coal and licking round his fingers; he fell on his knees, looked up in a reverent manner, held up the coal in front, and said, 'Is not God good? Are not his laws wonderful?'"

Among those who have left on record their testimony to this manifestation are Lord Lindsay, Lord Adare, H. D. Jencken, W. M. Wilkinson, S. C. Hall, etc. etc.

As the great mathematician Professor de Morgan once wittily and wisely wrote:

> "If I were bound to choose among things which I can conceive, I should say that there is some sort of action of some combination of will, intellect, and physical power, which is not that of any of the human beings present. But, thinking it very likely that the universe may contain a few agencies—say, half-a-million—about which no man knows anything, I cannot but suspect that a small proportion of these agencies —say, five thousand—may be severally competent to the production of all the phenomena, or may be quite up to the task among them. The physical explanations which I have seen are easy, but miserably insufficient; the spiritual hypothesis is sufficient, but ponderously difficult. Time and thought will decide, the second asking the first for more results of trial."

It is inconceivable that such a man as Stainton Moses—a hard-working parish priest and a respected schoolmaster—should deliberately have entered upon a course of trickery for the mere pleasure of mystifying a small circle of acquaintances. The whole course of his previous life, his apparently sincere religious feeling, all combine to contradict such a supposition. Neither is it credible that such a petty swindler would have carried out his deceptions to the end, and have left behind fresh problems, the elucidation of which his eyes could never behold.

CHAPTER XI

THE MATERIALISATION OF "GHOSTS"

If much of the physical phenomena just described be well within the scope of natural possibility, it is somewhat otherwise with the class of manifestations I shall now touch upon. It is one thing to exert consciously or unconsciously, as Home, Cook, Paladino, Moses and other mediums have done, in the presence of scientifically trained witnesses, unknown and supernormal muscular power. Table rapping, levitation, "apports," may all be genuine enough and accounted for in a manner which, if not wholly satisfying, is at least not unreasonable. But when those assisting at a *séance* actually behold with their eyes and touch with their hands, and even photograph with a camera, the materialised objects of the spirits with whom the medium is in communion, the pulse of the inquirer quickens. He is now indeed approaching the crucial problem, the crowning achievement of spiritualism. For although in a former chapter we have the testimony of people who saw "ghosts," these ghosts might, to my mind, clearly be the result of telepathy. They appear on special occasions at important and significant crises, but the claim of the spiritualistic medium is that he can casually, and on the demand of one of the circle, produce a visible, tangible figure of a deceased husband, wife, parent, or friend.

This materialisation is wholly a recent species of manifestation. One of the first to testify to having seen a materialised figure at a *séance* was the well-known S. C. Hall, who recognised during one of Home's *séances* the figure of his deceased sister. Other mediums repeated the feat, and shadowy forms and faces began to appear and move about during their dark *séances*. It is a suspicious fact that in some cases these forms, made visible by a faintly luminous vapour, were accompanied by an odour of phosphorus. Sceptics naturally took great advantage of the alleged circumstance. Soon, however, a new medium, Florence Cook, was rumoured to have produced materialised forms in a good light which baffled all the sceptics. Miss Cook claimed to be "controlled" by a spirit known under the name of "Katie."

We have this account from a writer who early attended to examine the mystery fairly:

> "In a short time, however, Katie—as the familiar of Miss B. was termed—thought she would be able to 'materialise' herself so far as to present the whole form, if we arranged the corner cupboard so as to admit of her doing so. Accordingly we opened the door, and from it suspended a rug or two opening in the centre, after the fashion of a Bedouin Arab's tent; formed a semicircle; sat and sang Longfellow's 'Footsteps of Angels.' Therein occurs the passage, 'Then the forms of the departed enter at the open door.' And, lo and behold! though we had left Miss B. tied and sealed to her chair and clad in an ordinary black dress somewhat voluminous as to the skirts, a tall, female figure, draped classically in white, with bare arms and feet, did enter at the open door, or rather down the centre from between the two rugs, and stood statuelike before us, spoke a few words, and retired; after which we entered the Bedouin tent and found pretty Miss B. with her dress as before, knots and seals secure, and her boots on! This was Form No. 1, the first I had ever seen. It looked as material as myself; and on a subsequent occasion—for I have seen it several times—we took four very good photographic portraits of it by magnesium light. The difficulty I still felt, with the form as with the faces, was that it seemed so thoroughly material and flesh-and-blood-like."

It is not my intention to speak of the multitude of early materialisations. As Mr Podmore points out, at these manifestations practically no precautions were taken against trickery. There was nothing, so far as can be discovered, to throw any hindrance in the way of the medium, if she chose, impersonating the spirit by exhibiting a mask through the opening of the curtain or by dressing herself up and walking about the room. Nor were there any collateral circumstances to justify belief in the genuineness of the manifestations.

Nevertheless, Miss Cook's claims attracted the attention of Sir William Crookes. He attended several *séances*—one, once, at the house of Mr Luxmoor, when "Katie" was standing before him in the room. He had distinctly heard from behind the curtain the sobbing and moaning habitually made by Miss Cook during such *séances*. At another *séance*, held at his own house, 12th March 1874, "Katie," robed in white, came to the opening of the

curtain and summoned him to the assistance of her medium. The man of science instantly obeyed the call, and found Miss Cook, attired in her ordinary black velvet dress, prone on the sofa. On another occasion he declares he saw two forms together in a good light; more than this, he actually procured a photograph of "Katie." But of this I will speak later, when I come to discuss spirit photography.

One of the most noted materialising mediums of to-day is Charles Miller, of San Francisco, of whom a certain Professor Reichel has recently written a lengthy account.

Miller's *séances* are described as very conclusive. At the first one, after Miller had retired into the cabinet, "the curtain was pulled aside, showing the medium asleep, and six fully developed phantoms standing beside him. Two spoke German to friends from their native land," and one discussed matters of a private nature with Professor Reichel. Similar occurrences were many times repeated, and dematerialisations were often "made before the curtain, in full view of the sitters" and "in ample light to observe everything." Professor Reichel says:

> "In the *séances* with Mr Miller I heard the spirits speak in English, French, and German, but I have been assured repeatedly that in a *séance* of seventy-five persons, representing many of the various nationalities in San Francisco, twenty-seven languages were spoken by materialised spirits, addressing different sitters."

Equally good results were obtained in a room taken at the Palace Hotel, for a special testsetting, the results of which were communicated to Colonel de Rochas, and again when Mr Miller visited the Professor at Los Angeles. The following incidents are of special interest, as throwing light on the forces made use of in the production of the phenomena, and in reference to allegations of fraud or personation:—

> "A sitting took place at noon. Before it began, and while Miller was standing in front of the cabinet, I heard 'Betsy's' voice whisper: 'Go out for a moment into the sun with the professor.' Accordingly I took Mr Miller by the arm, and together we went out into the sunshine. After a few moments we returned, and at the moment we entered the dark room

> the writer, as well as everyone else present, saw Mr Miller completely strewn with a shining, white, glittering, snowlike mass, that entirely covered his dark cheviot suit. This singular occurrence had been witnessed repeatedly—even when the medium had not previously been in the sun. At such times it appeared gradually after the room had been darkened."

This snowlike mass the author regards as "the white element of magnetism, which the phantoms use in their development." He also says:

> "In another *séance* held by Miller, 'Betsy' told me that she would show me something that often happened in *séances* with other materialisation mediums—namely, that the medium himself frequently appeared disguised as a spirit. She asked me to come to the curtain, where she told me that the medium himself would come out draped in white muslin, and the muslin would then suddenly disappear. This was verified. When the medium came out in his disguise, I grasped him by the hand, and like a flash of lightning the white veiling vanished."

Reichel quotes Kiesewetter to the effect that in these cases "there is a kind of pseudo-materialisation, in which the medium, in hypnosis, walks in a somnambulistic condition, playing the part of the spirit, in which case the mysterious vanishing of the spiritual veilings points to an incipient magical activity on the part of the *psyche*."

Large numbers of Miller's materialisations were photographed, showing, besides the fully materialised forms, "several spirits who could not be seen with the physical eyes, one of whom was immediately recognised."

The experiments of Sir William Crookes and others by Mr Cromwell Varley, with various mediums, supply us with the best proof we have that medium and spirit possess separate identities. Of course there were, and are still, numerous so-called exposures of mediums in the act of materialisation. On other occasions the materialised form has been seized and found to be the medium himself.

A typical incident of this kind was the exposure of the mediums William and Rita, which took place in Amsterdam, under circumstances which made it difficult for the most hardened believer to lay all the blame upon the spirits. The incident took place in the rooms of a spiritualist; the members of the circle were spiritualists; and it was aggrieved and indignant spiritualists who made the facts public. Suspicion had been aroused; one of the sitters clutched at the spirit form of "Charlie," and grasped Rita by the coat collar. Up to this point, no doubt, the spiritualist theories already referred to were elastic enough to cover the facts. But when the mediums were searched there were found in their pockets or hidden in various parts of their clothing—on Rita a nearly new beard, six handkerchiefs, assorted, and a small, round scent bottle, containing phosphorised oil, bearing a resemblance all too convincing to "Charlie's" spirit lamp; on Williams a dirty black beard, with brown silk ribbon, and several yards of very dirty muslin—the simple ingredients which represented the spiritual make-up of the repentant pirate, John King—together with another bottle of phosphorised oil, a bottle of scent, and other "properties."

But we have not to deal here with the obviously fraudulent features of modern spiritualism. Years ago Mr H. W. Harrison summed up the position. He pointed out that there were two classes of so-called materialisations: (1) forms with flexible features, commonly bearing a strong resemblance to the medium, which move and speak. These are the forms which come out when the medium is in the cabinet; (2) Forms with features which are inflexible and masklike (the epithet is not Mr Harrison's) and which do not move about or speak. Such inflexible faces are seen chiefly when the medium is held by the sitters, or is in full view of the circle. Mr Harrison then continues: "We have patiently watched for years for a living, flexible face, in a good light, which face bore no resemblance to that of the medium, and was not produced on his or her own premises. Hitherto this search has been prosecuted without success. Mr A. R. Wallace and Mr Crookes have witnessed a great number of form manifestations, without once recording that off the premises of the medium they have seen a living, flexible, materialised spirit-form bearing no resemblance to the sensitive. Neither has Mr Varley made any such record."

The presumption must be one of fraud, especially when conditions are laid down which serve to prevent full investigation. I have before me the printed conditions of a North London Spiritualistic society:

> "As a member of the society you must bear in mind that you will be bound *in honour* to accept all the rules laid down by our Spirit controls, and by the leader of the meeting, as to the conditions under which the meetings are held, such as the darkened room, the holding of hands so as to form a strongly magnetic ring in front of the medium, etc.—and it is interesting to note that the great Mesmer, when he was conducting his experiments in magnetism more than one hundred years ago, had discovered the advantage of 'a circle' formed in this way, for he writes: 'The power of magnetism is augmented by establishing a direct communication between several persons. This can be done in two ways: the more simple is to form a chain, with a certain number of persons made to hold each other's hands; it can also be done by means of the 'baquet' (a mechanical contrivance invented by himself)."
>
> "No one should ever attempt to touch a spirit unless invited to do so by the spirits themselves, and the circle, once formed, must never be broken by unloosing of hands. If this becomes *really* necessary at any time, permission should first be asked, when the controlling spirit will give instructions as to how it is to be carried out."

I cannot forbear from quoting further the following passage addressed to members of the society:—

> "You will greatly assist us in obtaining good results if you will kindly use a little discretion in the matter of your food, especially on the day of the meeting, when fish, vegetables, fruit (especially bananas), and light food of that description are most helpful, but meat, wine, beer, or spirits (wine and spirits especially) should be carefully avoided; and we find that it is better to make a good meal in the middle of the day, a substantial tea at 5.30, and supper after the meeting, as by following this plan the members of the circle are able to give off more of the spiritual *aura* which is used by the controls in building up the forms which appear to us, each member of the circle contributing his or her share unconsciously.

> "The use of non-actinic light, such as that obtained from a small dark lantern, is defended on the grounds that the actinic rays coming from the violet end of the spectrum are so rapid in their movements that they immediately break up any combination of matter produced under such circumstances. Any form of light, except the red, or perhaps the yellow, rays would have this effect. That is one reason why the cabinet is employed, because that would shut off any form of light from the medium whilst the forms are building up; although on several occasions, from time to time, when the form has thus been built up fully, we have been able to use a red light strong enough to illuminate the whole of the room."

So long as spiritualists, as I have before remarked, maintain this attitude, so long must they meet with incredulity on the part of official science. In nearly all these private circles the precautions taken against trickery are absurdly lacking, and, as we have just seen, frequently purposely omitted. Thus we have to fall back in considering the genuine character of the phenomena on the good faith of the medium. When the medium is known to be a man of blameless life, and has long been before the public undetected in any deception, the presumption would certainly appear to be in favour of his bona-fides. But of what value is this presumption should the medium not be conscious of his actions when his impersonation of this or that character is wholly undertaken by his secondary or subliminal self? Here we begin to have glimmerings of the great truth which may conceivably underlie the parable of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, and investigations into the marvels of multiple personalities lead us further towards the light.

On the whole, the conclusion I have arrived at is that, where the element of fraud is eliminated, we might rationally seek for an explanation in hallucination. Take the famous case of Archdeacon Colley and Mr Monck. The Archdeacon actually declared that he saw the psychic or spirit form grow out of his left side:

> "First, several faces, one after another, of great beauty appeared, and in amazement we saw—and as I was standing close up to the medium,

> even touching him—I saw most plainly, several times, a perfect face and form of exquisite womanhood partially issue from Dr Monck, about the region of the heart. Then, after several attempts, the full-formed figure, in a nebulous condition at first, but growing solider as it issued from the medium, left Dr Monck and stood, a separate individuality, two or three feet off, bound to him by a slender attachment, as of gossamer, which, at my request, 'Samuel,' the control, severed with the medium's left hand, and there stood embodied a spirit form of unutterable loveliness, robed in attire spirit-spun—a meshy webwork from no mortal loom, of a fleeciness inimitable, and of transfiguration whiteness truly glistening."

Now, as Mr Podmore somewhat satirically points out:

> "It is difficult to believe that the exquisite spirit form which presented itself to Mr Colley's glowing imagination was merely a confection of masks, stuffed gloves, and muslin, actuated by a jointed rod, but we cannot help remembering, if Mr Colley did not, that articles of this kind had, a twelve-month previously, been found, under compromising circumstances, in the possession of Dr Monck."

The recognitions which take place at *séances* are undoubtedly to a large extent sense deceptions. There is now a professional medium at whose *séances* spirit faces are constantly being recognised. Of course the performance takes place in the dark. A faintly illuminated slate shows the profiles against the background, and one or other of the members generally recognises it. The mouth and chin of the female faces shown at these *séances* are generally veiled, but this does not appear to affect the recognition.

On the whole, the testimony for and against the reality of spirits at the better class of *séance* is pretty evenly balanced. I hesitate to disturb it, although remarking, parenthetically, that the believers have the most, if not the best, of the literature on the subject.

And for those who are deeply perplexed there is always the theory of hallucination to fall back upon.

CHAPTER XII

SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY

If the claim of the spiritualists to having achieved the materialisation of the spirits of deceased persons were restricted to the mere ocular, oral, and tactile evidence of the dark *séance*, the theory of hallucination would account for much that is perplexing. But the problem becomes complicated when the spiritualists come forward with proof that their senses have not misled them. It is only a few months since that a young man in the north of England, on photographing his mother and sisters, was greatly startled to find his late father's face also on the plate. He had not made use of the camera, we are told, for eighteen months. Recently, too, a professional photographer in London was commissioned to photograph a grave which was surmounted by a beautiful basket of flowers. To his consternation, within the handle appeared the facial lineaments of the deceased.

The earliest spirit photograph, as far as can be ascertained, dates from 1862, when an American photographer named Mumler, on developing a photograph of himself, discovered the likeness of a cousin who had been dead some dozen years previously. The case was investigated by Dr Mumler of Boston, who considered that many of the "spirit photographs" afterwards taken by Mumler were genuine, but that others were, in our modern phrase, indubitably faked. This was put down to Mumler's desire to cope with the unusual demand and satisfy his host of sitters.

Mumler, after twelve years' experience, writing to Mr James Burns, says:

> "I have been investigated by the best photographers in America, and have their testimony in my favour, given under oath; I have been tried in a court of justice, and been honourably acquitted; and, lastly, I have the evidence of thousands of people who have had pictures taken, and recognised the likenesses of their spirit friends, many of whom never had a picture taken during life. I have been a humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty, to place a link in the great chain of evidence that

> binds the two worlds together. Flowers, birds, and animals have frequently appeared upon the plates and one lady was delighted to recognise by her side her faithful old black retriever."

Not till ten years later did a photographer named Hudson succeed, with the aid of a medium, in producing spirit pictures. The *modus operandi* appeared simple. The sitter was posed before the camera, and the picture was subsequently developed, when besides the sitter's own image there appeared another figure or figures usually draped, with the features blurred or only partly distinguishable. Usually these figures were recognised unhesitatingly by the sitters as portraits of deceased relatives or friends. Afterwards the practice of spirit photography received a rude shock. They were examined carefully by professional photographers, and some of them were found to bear clear marks of double exposure, the background in each case being visible through the dress of the sitter—a fatal defect in spirit photography. Moreover it was found that in some cases the medium had dressed up to play the rôle of spirit. Whereupon several of those who had professed to recognise the "ghosts" now hastened to repudiate their recognition. But spirit photography was not to be quashed so easily. The experiments went on, and faces and figures appeared on the developed plate which seem to have considerably baffled the experts. Sir William Crookes now resolved to put the matter to a test by attempting to obtain a photograph of "Katie," the famous "control" of Miss Cook, the medium. The young lady gave a series of sittings in May 1874 at Sir William's house for the purpose. These sittings took place by electric light, no fewer than five cameras being simultaneously at work. The medium lay down on the floor behind a curtain, her face muffled in a shawl. When the materialisation was complete "Katie" would appear in the full light in front of the curtain:

> "I frequently," writes Sir William Crookes, "drew the curtain on one side when Katie was standing near; and it was a common thing for the seven or eight of us in the laboratory to see Miss Cook and Katie at the same time, under the full blaze of the electric light. We did not on these occasions actually see the face of the medium, because of the shawl, but we saw her hands and feet; we saw her move uneasily under the influence of the intense light, and we heard her moan occasionally. I have one photograph of the two together, but Katie is seated in front of

Miss Cook's head."

I have not seen these photographs of "Katie," but Mr Podmore has, and when comparing them with contemporary portraits of Miss Cook herself he is inclined to consider the likeness between the two sets unmistakable. "The apparently greater breadth of 'spirit' face," he writes, "may well be due to the fact that, whereas Miss Cook wore hanging ringlets, 'Katie's' hair is effectually concealed by the drapery, which in most cases comes down over the forehead, and falls in two thick folds on either side of the head, something like the headgear of a sphinx. Again, as Miss Cook, when photographed, wore her ordinary dress, which concealed her feet, the apparent difference in height on some occasions between herself and the spirit figure cannot be relied upon. One piece of evidence would, indeed, have been conclusive—that the ears of the spirit form should have appeared intact, for Miss Cook's ears were pierced for earrings. But the encircling drapery effectually concealed both the ears and the hair of the spirit 'Katie.'"

The evidence for photographs of invisible people which we sometimes hear abduced as adequate is surprisingly feeble. For instance, in a recent anonymous and weak book, said to be written by a member of the Society for Psychical Research, two photographs are reproduced which are said to have been obtained under what are considered crucial conditions; but the narrative itself at once suggests a simple trick on the part of the photographer—viz. the provision of backgrounds for sitters with vague human forms all ready depicted on them in sulphate of quinine.

Sir Oliver Lodge is of opinion that it is by no means physically impossible that some of these temporary semi-material accretions might be inadequate to appeal to our eyes, and yet be of a kind able to impress a photographic plate; but here he confesses that the evidence, to his mind, wholly breaks down, and he admits that he has never yet seen a satisfying instance of what is termed a spirit photograph; nor is it easy to imagine the kind of record apart from testimony which in such a case would be convincing, unless such photographs could be produced at will.

A conviction of fraud having entered the minds of the sceptically inclined, the exposure of a certain Parisian photographer, Buguet, shook the faith of the credulous. Buguet enjoyed in London an extraordinary success. Many

leading people sat to him and obtained "spirit photographs," by them clearly recognisable, of their deceased relations. No less than forty out of one hundred and twenty photographs examined by Stainton Moses were pronounced by the sitters to be genuine likenesses of spirits, and baffled the scrutiny of the sceptics. Nevertheless Buguet was arrested and charged by the French Government for fraudulent production of spirit photographs. At his trial Buguet disconcerted the whole spiritualistic world by confessing, he said that the whole of his spirit photographs were obtained by means of double exposure. To begin with, he employed three or four assistants to play the part of ghost. Nevertheless, in spite of his confession, in spite of the trick apparatus confiscated by the police, at Buguet's trial witness after witness, people high in the social and professional world, came forward to testify that they had not been deceived, that the spirit photographs were genuine. They refused to doubt the evidence of their own eyesight. One M. Dessenon, a picture dealer, had obtained a spirit portrait of his wife; he had been instantly struck with the likeness, and had shown it to the lady's relatives, who exclaimed at once on its exactness. The judge asked Buguet for an explanation. The prisoner replied that it was pure chance. "I had," he said, "no photograph of Madame Dessenon." "But," cried the witness, "my children, like myself, thought the likeness perfect. When I showed them the picture, they cried, 'It is mamma!' I have seen all M. Buguet's properties and pictures, and there is nothing in the least like the picture I have obtained. I am convinced it is my wife." As a result, many spiritualists, including Stainton Moses and William Howitt, refused to consider the case one of fraud. They regarded Buguet as a genuine medium who had been bound to confess to imaginary trickery. Yet after this spirit photography as a profession has not flourished in this country. There is one professional who is responsible for many ghost pictures. But in his productions appear unmistakable signs of double exposures. You see the pattern of the carpet and the curtain of the study visible through the sitter's body and clothes. In one instance at all events, where the ghost represents a well-known statesman, the head has obviously been cut from the photograph and the contour draped to hide the cut edges. But the phenomena of spirit photography are abundant enough in private circles.

I have before me as I write a number of reputed spirit photographs obtained by private persons both with and without the aid of a professional medium. In

one sent me by a gentleman resident at Finsbury Park, which is a very impressive specimen of its kind, the fact of a double exposure is obvious to the least experienced in dark-room matters. Notwithstanding, the photographer has apparently made a speciality of this kind of work.

> "In my collection [he writes] of over two thousand specimens are portraits of Atlantean priests, who flourished about 12,000 years ago, Biblical patriarchs, poets, Royalties, clerics, scientists, literary men, etc., pioneer spiritualists, like Emma H. Britten, Luther Marsh, Wallace, and John Lamont. The latest additions are, I am happy to say, my kind old friend Mrs Glendinning, and a worthy quartette of earnest workers in Dr Younger, Mr Thomas Everitt, Mr C. Lacey, and David Duguid."

One of the most curious instances of a ghost photograph occurred in the summer of 1892. Six months previously a lady had taken a photograph of the library at D—— Hall. She kept the plate a long time before developing it, and when developed it showed the faint but clearly recognisable figure of a man sitting in a large arm-chair. A print from the photograph was obtained and shown, when the image was immediately recognised as the likeness of the late Lord D——, the owner of D—— Hall. What was more, it was ascertained that Lord D—— had actually been buried on the day the photograph was taken. A copy of the photograph was sent to Professor Barrett, who examined it and reported (1) that the image is too faint and blurred for any likeness to be substantiated; (2) that the plate had been exposed in the camera for an hour and the room left unguarded; (3) that actual experiments show that an appearance such as that on the plate could have been produced if a man—there were four men in the house—had sat in the chair for a few seconds during the exposure, moving his head and limbs the while.

Another ghost picture described by Mr Podmore was probably caused in a similar way. A chapel was photographed, and when the plate was developed a face was faintly seen in a panel of the woodwork, which the photographer recognised as a young acquaintance who had not long since met with a tragic death. "In fact," writes Mr Podmore, "when he told me the story and showed me the picture, I could easily see the faint but well-marked features of a handsome melancholy lad of eighteen. A colleague, however, to whom I showed the photograph without relating the story, at once identified the face

as that of a woman of thirty. The outlines are in reality so indistinct as to leave ample room for the imagination to work on; and there is no reason to doubt that, as in the ghost of the library, the camera had merely preserved faint traces of some intruder who, during prolonged exposure, stood for a few seconds in front of it."

In spite of all the damaging *exposés* and these discouraging explanations many intelligent persons the world over will still go on believing in the genuineness of spirit photography. Let me give a few examples of their testimony. M. Reichel, to whom allusion has already been made, states that at one of Miller's *séances* in America, held on 29th October 1905, those present suddenly heard a great number of voices behind the curtain:

> "Betsy told us that sometimes there are Egyptian women and sometimes Indians who come in a crowd to produce their phenomena. On October 29th and again on November 2nd I sent for a San Francisco photographer, Mr Edward Wyllie, to see what impression would be made on a photographic plate by the beings who appeared. Some remarkable pictures were taken by flashlight. Besides the fully materialised forms, there were shown on the photographs several spirits who could not be seen by the physical eyes.
>
> "In one of the latter figures I instantly recognised an uncle of mine, whom I had made acquainted with spiritualism about twelve years previously, through the assistance of another medium."

A correspondent sends me an interesting account of investigating materialised spirits in daylight:

> "Miss Fairlamb (afterwards Mrs Mellon) was the medium, and the photographs of 'Geordie' and others taken in the garden in broad daylight were quite successful. The conditions must have been most harmonious, as 'Geordie' afterwards, when twilight came on, walked about the lawn, and even ventured into the house, returning to the tent, which served as a cabinet, with an umbrella and hassock in his hands."

Dr Theodore Hausmann, one of the oldest physicians in Washington, U.S.A., has devoted many years to this particular phase of mediumship. He places

himself before his camera in the study and photographs his spirit visitors, who have included his father, son, and President Lincoln. The opening paragraph in an article he wrote is as follows:—

> "Grieving parents, the bereaved widow and mother, will only be too happy if they can see the pictures of those again who were so dear to their hearts, and whose image gradually will vanish if nothing is left to renew their memories."

There have been many touching letters from relatives of grateful thanks, who imagine themselves in this way to have received portraits of their dear ones who have passed away.

In a work which I have come across in which spiritualism is by no means supported Mr J. G. Raupert acknowledges:

> "That as regards spirit photographs, he 'obtained many striking pictures of this character, under good test conditions, and attended by circumstances yielding unique and exceptionally valuable evidence.... The evidence in favour of some of these psychic pictures is as good as it is ever likely to be, and, respecting some of these obtained by the present writer, expert photographic authorities have expressed their verdict. Sir William Crookes has obtained them in his own house under personally imposed conditions, and many private experimenters in different parts of the world have been equally successful."

This from an avowed opponent is striking testimony to some kind of manifestation which is not, in intent, at least, fraudulent.

CHAPTER XIII

CLAIRVOYANCE

It was natural that out of all these mystic practices—those I have already indicated and the others I am about to indicate—a cult or religion should have been moulded. To this cult has been given the name of spiritualism (or spiritism, as some of the newer devotees prefer to call it). Its great outstanding feature and essential mystery is, of course, physical mediumship. The creed of the believer in disembodied spirits is that the medium acts as the passive agent for certain physical and intellectual manifestations which do not belong to the rôle of the visible, tangible world in which we live. One of the forms of those manifestations is clairvoyance; others are materialisation —*i.e.* the actual incarnation of spiritual forms—physical manifestations such as table rapping, levitation, slate writing, etc., trance utterances and spirit photography.

From the physical phenomena to the intellectual phenomena of clairvoyance.

Clairvoyance literally means clear seeing; but in spiritualism it has a technical meaning, and may be either objective or subjective. In the terminology of the cult, objective clairvoyance is described as "that psychic power or function of seeing, objectively, by and through the spiritualism sensorium of sight which pervades the physical mechanism of vision, spiritual beings and things. A few persons are born with this power; in some it is developed, and in others it has but a casual quickening. Its extent is governed by the rate of vibration under which it operates; thus, one clairvoyant may see spiritual things which to another may be invisible because of the degree of difference in the intensity of the powers."

Further, "subjective clairvoyance is that psychic condition of a person which enables spirit intelligences to impress or photograph upon the brain of that person, at will, pictures and images which are seen as visions by that person, without the aid of the physical eye. These pictures and images may be of things spiritual or material, past or present, remote or near, hidden or

uncovered, or they may have their existence simply in the conception or imagination of the spirit communicating them."

Putting aside, however, all "supernatural" explanation, let us consider how we can best account for the fact, if fact it be, of clairvoyance. What we see is this: that under given conditions the mouth of a man or woman by no means above, and often below, the intellectual average utters, and the hand writes of, matters absolutely outside the normal ken of the minds of such a man or woman. Evidence for this phenomena is, to put it bluntly, staggering. If, unknown to a living soul, your wife or sister accidentally dropped half-a-sovereign down a deep well, and whilst she was still continuing to hug her little secret to her bosom you were present at a clairvoyant sitting where the medium in a trance informed you of the circumstances, you would no doubt be astounded. Well, the manifestations of a conjurer are occasionally astounding. No matter how our reason is baffled at first, it behoves us not only to seek a natural explanation of the fact but also to ascertain and authenticate the fact itself. But a man may not implicitly trust his senses.

I soon found that merely having been a witness of a mysterious phenomenon no more qualified me for passing judgment upon it, or even furnished me with a more advantageous standpoint from which to deliver my opinions, than a man who has first seen the ocean and even tasted it can explain why it is salt. No, a man after all, unless he is equipped with unusual facilities, had best stick to the recorded testimony of the cloud of witnesses. Amongst these witnesses, who are also acute and experienced investigators, are Lord Rayleigh, Mr Balfour, Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Alfred Russel Wallace, Dr Hodgson, Frederic Myers, Professor Hyslop, M. Camille Flammarion, Professor Richet, Professor William James, Professor Janet, Mr Frank Podmore and Professor Lombroso. I think it fair to assume that these men represent the white light of human intelligence of the decade. They have made a special study of the matter, and they all seem to be agreed that in the case of trance lucidity and clairvoyance the normal mind of the writer or speaker is not at work. Yet there certainly would seem to be an operating intelligence, having a special character and a special knowledge.

What, then, is that operating intelligence? By what means does it obtain its special knowledge? Sir Oliver Lodge formulates two answers to the second question.

1. By telepathy from living people.

2. By direct information imparted to it by the continued, conscious, individual agency of deceased persons.

These he regards as the chief customary alternative answers. But there is a wide, perhaps an impassable, gulf between these two alternatives. We can here do no more than glance at the nature of the evidence.

The mystery of mediumship has probably received more attention from M. Flournoy, Professor of Psychology in the University of Geneva, than from anyone else, not excepting Janet and Hodgson, and our English investigators. Certainly his opportunities for studying at close quarters subjects of a more normal type than the Salpetrière patients are unparalleled. M. Flournoy's most famous case is that of Hélène Smith.

> "Hélène [he writes] was as a child quiet and dreamy, and had occasional visions, but was, on the whole, not specially remarkable. She is, to all outward appearances at the present time, healthy even to robustness. From the age of fifteen she has been employed in a large commercial establishment in Geneva, and holds a position of some responsibility. But it is in 1892 that her real history begins. In that year she was persuaded by some friends to join a spiritualistic circle. It soon appeared that she was herself a powerful medium. At first her mediumship consisted in seeing visions, hearing voices, and assisting in tilting the table, whilst still retaining more or less consciousness and subsequent memory of her experiences. Shortly after M. Flournoy's admission to the circle, in the winter of 1894-95, Miss Smith's mediumship advanced a stage, and she habitually passed at the *séance* into a trance state, retaining subsequently no memory of her visions and doings in that state. Her development followed at first the normal course. She delivered messages of a personal character to her sitters, purporting to emanate from deceased friends and the like. She offered numerous proofs of clairvoyance. She was from time to time controlled by spirits of the famous dead. Some of her earliest trances were under the guidance and inspiration of Victor Hugo. Within a few months the spirit of the poet—too late, indeed, for his own post-mortem reputation, for he had already perpetrated some verses—was expelled with ignominy by a

more masterful demon who called himself Leopold. The newcomer was at first somewhat reticent on his own past, and when urgently questioned was apt to take refuge in moral platitudes. Later, however, he revealed himself as Giuseppe Balsamo, Count Cagliostro. It then appeared that in Hélène herself was reincarnated the hapless Queen Marie Antoinette, and that others of the mortals represented Mirabeau, Prince of Orleans, etc....

"It is Hélène's extra-planetary experiences, however, which have excited most attention, and which furnished to the attendants at her circle the most convincing proofs of her dealings with the spiritual world. In November 1894, the spirit of the entranced medium was wafted—not without threatenings of sea-sickness—through the cosmic void, to arrive eventually on the planet Mars. Thereafter night after night she described to the listening circle the people of our neighbouring planet, their food, dress, and ways of life. At times she drew pictures of the inhabitants, human and animal—of their houses, bridges, and other edifices, and of the surrounding landscape. Later she both spoke and wrote freely in the Martian language. From the writings reproduced in M. Flournoy's book it is clear that the characters of the Martian script are unlike any in use on earth, and that the words (of which a translation is furnished) bear no resemblance, superficially at least, to any known tongue. The spirits—for several dwellers upon Mars used Hélène's organism to speak and write through—delivered themselves with freedom and fluency, and were consistent in their usage both of the spoken and the written words. In fact, Martian, as used by the entranced Hélène, has many of the characteristics of a genuine language; and it is not surprising that some of the onlookers, who may have hesitated over the authenticity of the other revelations, were apparently convinced that these Martian utterances were beyond the common order of nature."

All his powers M. Flournoy bent to elucidate the mystery. He made up his mind that Hélène must somewhere have come across one of the works containing Flammarion's speculations concerning Mars. The landscapes were suggested by Japanese lacquer and Nankin dishes. As for the language, it is just such a work of art as one might form by substituting for each word in the French dictionary an arbitrary collocation of letters, and for each letter a new and arbitrary symbol. The vowel and consonant signs are the same as in

French; so are the inflections, the grammar, the construction. (Take, for example, the negative ke ani=ne pas, the employment of the same word zi to express both la "the" and là "there.") If it is childish as a work of art, it is miraculous enough as a feat of memory. But the reader has not forgotten what the subliminal self is capable of achieving as regards time appreciation mentioned in an early chapter. When, however, it comes to Hélène's telepathic and clairvoyant powers, M. Flournoy, in spite of his long investigation, can find no explanation of the supernormal to fit the case. Her mediumship since 1892 included manifestations of all kinds. They began with physical phenomena, but they soon ceased. Her clairvoyant messages during trance are certainly of a remarkable character. Her reception of distant scenes and persons, of which she was apparently unacquainted, has been carefully investigated and authenticated by numerous persons of reputation. It is this aspect of spiritualism which has of recent years commanded most attention from trained observers. The trance utterances of such well-known clairvoyants as the late Stainton Moses, Mrs Thompson, and Mrs Piper have been subjected to rigid and precise inquiry, and on the whole it is on this type of evidence that the strongest arguments of the genuineness of spiritualism really rests. It is at once the most impressive, the most interesting, and the most voluminous.

Of Stainton Moses I have already spoken. This medium was, as we have seen, a man of character and probity, English Professor at the University College School for eighteen years, a man who was never detected in the slightest fraud, and who died in 1892 regretted by a host of intimate friends. Stainton Moses left a mass of published testimony to his pretended communications from the spirits of deceased persons. He attached great importance to the evidence for spiritualistic doctrines. Altogether the "controls" or communicators numbered thirty-eight. Some of these Moses or other members of the circles had known in life; others—such as Swedenborg, Bishop Wilberforce, and President Garfield—were historical personages. Besides these there was a class of individuals of no particular importance, and apparently unknown to the medium and his friends. Yet it is worthy of remark that the spirits by whom Moses was "controlled" never withheld any

data which would faciliate verification. For instance, at one *séance* a spirit put in an appearance by raps, giving the name "Rosmira." She said that she lived at Kilburn and had died at Torquay on 10th January 1874. She said that her husband's name was Ben, and that his surname was Lancaster. It turned out that a fortnight before the whole particulars were to be found in the "Death" notices in *The Daily Telegraph*. "Mr Moses' spirits," comments Mr Podmore in his "History of Spiritualism," habitually furnished accurate obituaries, or gave such other particulars of their lives as could be gathered from the daily papers, from published biographies, or from the *Annual Register* and other works of reference. All the spirits, indeed, gave their names, with one exception—an exception so significant that the case is worth recording. *The Pall Mall Gazette* for 21st February 1874 contains the following item of intelligence:—

> "A cabdriver out of employment this morning threw himself under a steam-roller which was being used in repairing the road in York-place, Marylebone, and was killed immediately."
>
> "Mr Moses was present at a *séance* that evening, and his hand was controlled, ostensibly by the spirit of the unhappy suicide, to write an account of the incident, and to draw a rough picture of a horse attached to a vehicle. The name of the dead man, it will be seen, does not appear in the newspaper account, and out of the thirty-eight spirits who gave proofs of their identity through the mediumship of Mr Moses this particular spirit alone chose to remain anonymous."

But a great part of Moses' mediumistic career was taken up with trance utterances purporting to come from various spirits. These writings, couched in clear, vigorous English, seems to flow readily "without any conscious intervention on the part of the mortal penman." In fact, so far was this so that he was able to read a book, or otherwise occupy his mind, during their production.

The claims of the celebrated medium Mrs Thompson were carefully investigated by a competent observer, Mrs A. W. Verrall, the wife of an eminent Cambridge scholar, and herself of no mean scholastic attainments.

I will endeavour to summarise Mrs Verrall's conclusions as follows:—

> Mrs Verrall says that Mrs Thompson was unable to ascertain the correct statements of facts which have been grouped under the four following heads:—
>
> (*a*) Things known to the sitter and directly present in his consciousness.
>
> (*b*) Things known to the sitter but not immediately present in his consciousness.
>
> (*c*) Things that have been well known to the sitter but are at the moment so far forgotten as only to be recalled by the statements of the medium.
>
> (*d*) Things unknown to the sitter.

With regard to things under head (*a*) Mrs Verrall says:

> "Some very clearly marked instances have come within my own observation; the cases are not very numerous, but the response from the 'control' to what has been thought but not uttered by me has been so rapid and complete that, were it not for the evidence of the other sitter, I should have been disposed to believe that I had unconsciously uttered the thought aloud.
>
> "Thus, on one occasion, 'Nelly' said that a red-haired girl was in my house that day, and I was wondering whether a certain friend of my daughter's, who is often at the house, would be there, when 'Nelly' added: 'Not So-and-so,' mentioning by name my daughter's friend, exactly as though I had uttered the passing thought. Again, when 'Nelly' was describing a certain bag given to me for my birthday, something she said made me for a moment think of a small leather handbag left in my house by a cousin and occasionally used by me, and she said: 'You had an uncle that died; it was not long after that.' The father of the cousin whom I had just thought of is the only uncle I have known, but his death long preceded the giving to me of the bag as a birthday present, which was what she had quite correctly described till my momentary thought apparently distracted her attention to the other bag. I have had in all some five or six instances of such apparently direct responses as the

> above to a thought in the sitter's mind; but when at 'Nelly's' suggestion I have fixed my attention on some detail for the sake of helping her to get it, I have never succeeded in doing anything but what she calls 'muggling her.'"

Another difficulty arises from the fact that mediums and their controls not infrequently receive impressions as pictures, and these pictures are liable to be misinterpreted. Mrs Verrall writes in her report of her sitting with Mrs Thompson:

> "Merrifield was said to be the name of a lady in my family. The name was given at first thus: 'Merrifield, Merryman, Merrythought, Merrifield; there is an old lady named one of these who,' etc. Later, 'Nelly' said: 'Mrs Merrythought, that's not quite right; it's like the name of a garden'; and after in vain trying to give her the name exactly, she said: 'I will tell you how names come to us. It's like a picture; I see school children enjoying themselves. You can't say Merryman because that's not a name, or Merrypeople.' 'Nelly' later on spoke of my mother as Mrs Happyfield or Mrs Merryfield with indifference" ("Proceedings," part xliv. p. 208).

It is probably for this reason that so much use is made in spirit communications of symbolism. The passage in which Mr Myers deals with the use of symbolism in automatic messages, in his work on "Human Personality," should be studied in this connection. He points out that there is "no a priori ground for supposing that language will have the power to express all the thoughts and emotions of man." And if this is true of man in his present state, how much more does it apply to man in another and more advanced state? With reference to automatic writings he says: "There is a certain quality which reminds one of *translation*, or of the composition of a person writing in a language in which he is not accustomed to talk."

As a result of her investigations, Mrs Verrall declares:

> "That Mrs Thompson is possessed of knowledge not normally obtained I regard as established beyond a doubt; that the hypothesis of fraud, conscious or unconscious, on her part fails to explain the phenomena seems to be equally certain; that to more causes than one is to be

> attributed the success which I have recorded seems to me likely. There is, I believe, some evidence to indicate that telepathy between the sitter and the trance personality is one of these contributory causes. But that telepathy from the living, even in an extended sense of the term, does not furnish a complete explanation of the occurrences observed by me, is my present belief."

Instances of clairvoyance in children are remarkably numerous. A few weeks ago the Rome correspondent of *The Tribune* reported that a boy of twelve, at Capua, "was discovered sobbing and crying as if his heart would break. Asked by his mother the reason of his distress, he said that he had just seen his father, who was absent in America, at the point of death, assisted by two Sisters of Charity. Next day a letter came from America announcing the father's death. Remembering the boy's vision, his mother tried to keep the tale a secret lest he should be regarded as 'possessed,' but her efforts were vain, several persons having been present when he explained the cause of his grief."

The explanation of telepathy would hardly seem to fit the case, since the father's death must have occurred at least eight or ten days previous to the vision.

I shall reserve for my next chapter what may be regarded as the classic illustration of the marvels of clairvoyance—that of Mrs Piper.

CHAPTER XIV

MRS PIPER'S TRANCE UTTERANCES

Almost alone amongst mediums of note, Mrs Piper of Boston has never resorted to physical phenomena, her powers being entirely confined to trance manifestations. No single medium, not even Hélène Smith, has been subjected to such close and continuous observation by expert scientific observers. In 1885, this lady's case was first investigated by Professor William James, of Harvard (brother of the famous novelist). Two years later Dr Hodgson and other members of the Society for Psychical Research began their observation of her trance utterances. This course of observation has continued for twenty years, and nearly all Mrs Piper's utterances have been placed on record. The late Dr Hodgson was indefatigable in his labours to test the genuineness of the phenomena. He spared no pains, and died, I believe, convinced that all means of accounting for them had been exhausted.

There is so much evidence concerning Mrs Piper, who, two years ago came to England at the invitation of the Society for Psychical Research, and was subjected to numerous tests, that I hesitate how best to typify its purport. Most striking is a letter to Professor James in the Society's "Proceedings" from a well-known professor, Shaler of Harvard, who attended a *séance*, with a very open mind indeed, on 25th May 1894, at Professor James's house in Cambridge (Boston).

Professor Shaler was disposed to favour neither the medium nor even the telepathic theory. He writes:

> "My Dear James,—At the sitting with Mrs Piper on May 25th I made the following notes:—
>
> "As you remember, I came to the meeting with my wife; when Mrs Piper entered the trance state Mrs Shaler took her hand. After a few irrelevant words, my wife handed Mrs Piper an engraved seal, which she knew, though I did not, had belonged to her brother, a gentleman from

Richmond, Virginia, who died about a year ago. At once Mrs Piper began to make statements clearly relating to the deceased, and in the course of the following hour she showed a somewhat intimate acquaintance with his affairs, those of his immediate family, and those of the family in Hartford, Conn., with which the Richmond family had had close social relations.

"The statements made by Mrs Piper, in my opinion, entirely exclude the hypothesis that they were the results of conjectures, directed by the answers made by my wife. I took no part in the questioning, but observed very closely all that was done.

"On the supposition that the medium had made very careful preparation for her sittings in Cambridge, it would have been possible for her to have gathered all the information which she rendered by means of agents in the two cities, though I must confess that it would have been rather difficult to have done the work.

"The only distinctly suspicious features were that certain familiar baptismal names were properly given, while those of an unusual sort could not be extracted, and also that one or two names were given correctly as regards the ceremony of baptism or the directory, but utterly wrong from the point of view of family usage. Thus the name of a sister-in-law of mine, a sister of my wife's, was given as Jane, which is true by the record, but in forty years' experience of an intimate sort I never knew her to be called Jane—in fact, I did not at first recognise who was meant.

"While I am disposed to hold to the hypothesis that the performance is one that is founded on some kind of deceit, I must confess that close observation of the medium made on me the impression that she was honest. Seeing her under any other conditions, I should not hesitate to trust my instinctive sense as to the truthfulness of the woman.

"I venture also to note, though with some hesitancy, the fact that the ghost of the ancient Frenchman who never existed, but who purports to control Mrs Piper, though he speaks with a first-rate stage French accent, does not, so far as I can find, make the characteristic blunders in the order of his English words which we find in actual life. Whatever the

medium is, I am convinced that this 'influence' is a preposterous scoundrel.

"I think I did not put strongly enough the peculiar kind of knowledge that the medium seems to have concerning my wife's brother's affairs. Certain of the facts, as, for instance, those relating to the failure to find his will after his sudden death, were very neatly and dramatically rendered. They had the real-life quality. So, too, the name of a man who was to have married my wife's brother's daughter, but who died a month before the time fixed for the wedding, was correctly given, both as regards surname and Christian name, though the Christian name was not remembered by my wife or me.

"I cannot determine how probable it is that the medium, knowing she was to have a sitting with you in Cambridge, or rather a number of them, took pains to prepare for the tests by carefully working up the family history of your friends. If she had done this for thirty or so persons, I think she could, though with some difficulty, have gained just the kind of knowledge which she rendered. She would probably have forgotten that my wife's brother's given name was Legh, and that of his mother Gabriella, while she remembered that of Mary and Charles, and also that of a son in Cambridge, who is called Waller. So, too, the fact that all trouble on account of the missing will was within a fortnight after the death of Mr Page cleared away by the action of the children was unknown. The deceased is represented as still troubled, though he purported to see just what was going on in his family.

"I have given you a mixture of observations and criticisms; let me say that I have no firm mind about the matter. I am curiously and yet absolutely uninterested in it, for the reason that I don't see how I can exclude the hypothesis of fraud, and until that can be excluded no advance can be made.

"When I took the medium's hand, I had my usual experience with them —a few preposterous compliments concerning the clearness of my understanding, and nothing more."

Among those who have made a careful study at first hand of Mrs Piper's clairvoyance besides Dr Hodgson and Professor James are Sir Oliver Lodge,

the late Frederic Myers, Mrs Sidgwick, Walter Leaf, Professor Romaine Newbold, and Professor J. H. Hyslop, and all of these have recorded their conviction that the results are not explicable by fraud or misrepresentation.

Another account which sheds light on what occurs at Mrs Piper's séances is furnished by Professor Estlin Carpenter, Oxford. It is dated 14th December 1894:

> "DEAR PROFESSOR JAMES,—I had a sitting yesterday with Mrs Piper at your house, and was greatly interested with the results obtained, as they were entirely unexpected by me. Various persons were named and described whom we could not identify (my wife was present); but the names of my father and mother were correctly given, with several details which were in no way present to my mind at the time. The illness from which my father was suffering at the time of his death was identified, but not the accident which took him from us. A penknife which I happened to have with me was rightly referred to its place on the desk in his study, and after considerable hesitation Mrs Piper wrote out the word *organ* when I asked concerning other objects in the room. She added spontaneously a very remarkable item about which I was in no way thinking—viz. that on Sunday afternoons or evenings (her phrase was 'twilight') we were accustomed to sing there together. She stated correctly that my mother was older than my father, but died after him; and she connected her death with my return from Switzerland in a manner that wholly surprised me, the fact being that her last illness began two or three days after my arrival home from Lucerne. She gave the initials of my wife's name rightly, and addressed words to her from her father, whose first name, George, was correct. She also desired me, in my father's name, not to be anxious about some family matters (which have only recently come to my knowledge), though their nature was not specified. Finally, though I should have mentioned this first, as it was at the outset of the interview, she told me that I was about to start on a voyage, and described the vessel in general terms, though she could not give its name or tell me the place where it was going. I saw enough to convince me that Mrs Piper possesses some very extraordinary powers, but I have no theory at all as to their nature or mode of exercise."

Another who visited Mrs Piper was the famous French author, M. Paul

Bourget, who was astonished at what he heard. He happened to have on his watch-chain a small seal which had been given him by a painter, long since dead, under the saddest circumstances, of whom it was impossible the medium could ever have heard; yet no sooner had she touched the object than she related to him the circumstance. One could quote case after case in the Society's reports, but in all the time Mrs Piper has been under such rigid scrutiny not one suspicious instance or one pointing to normal acquisition of facts has been discovered.

Some have boldly hazarded the conjecture that Mrs Piper worked up the *dossiers* of her sitters beforehand; inasmuch as she could easily obtain her facts in many ways; by reading private letters, for instance, or information derived from other mediums, or by employing private inquiry agents. These things are said to be habitually done by professional clairvoyants, by either going themselves or sending an agent in the capacity of, say, a book canvasser, to some town or district, and get all the information they can, to return some months later and give clairvoyant sittings. There is a belief, and it is possibly correct, that there is an organisation which gives and exchanges information thus obtained by the members of the Society. Perhaps this may account for the extraordinary good fortune of some spiritualists in obtaining "tests." Some sitters who went to Mrs Piper had visited other mediums previously. But one may be sure that all precautions were taken to ensure against her knowing the names of the sitters, so that she could not use any information, even if she had obtained any, in this way. Those best qualified to judge are convinced that her knowledge was not gained in this way, partly because of the precautions used and partly by reason of the information itself.

As has been said, Mrs Piper was under the close scrutiny of Dr Hodgson for many years, and nothing of the kind has ever come to light. Also Dr Hodgson arranged beforehand her sittings for more than ten years, never telling her the names of the sitters, who in almost every instance were unknown to her by sight, and were without distinction introduced under the name of "Smith." She made so many correct statements at many individual sittings, and the proportion of successful sittings is so high, that it is very difficult to attribute fraud to her. About dates she appears to be very vague. She prefers to give Christian names to surnames, and of the former those in common use rather than those out of the way. As her descriptions of houses or places are generally failures, she seldom attempts them. Mrs Piper seems to be weakest,

indeed, just where the so-called medium is most successful. Her strongest points are describing diseases, the character of the sitter, his idiosyncrasies, and the character of his friends, their sympathies, loves, hates, and relationships in general, unimportant incidents in their past histories, and so on. To retain such information in the memory is very difficult, and to obtain it by general means well-nigh impossible.

Many of the personalities or "controls" of Mrs Piper speak, write, and act in a way extraordinarily in consonance with those characters as they were on earth. In other words, her "controls" have well-differentiated identities. Each has a different manner, a different voice, different acts, different ways of looking at things; in fact, has a different character. For example, there is the spirit of G. P., a young journalist and author who died suddenly in February 1892. A few weeks later his spirit possessed Mrs Piper's organism, and although he was unknown to Mrs Piper in life, yet for years since then he has carried on numerous prolonged conversations with his friends, including Dr Hodgson, and supplied numerous proofs of his knowledge of the concerns of the deceased G. P. G. P.'s personal effects, MSS., etc., are referred to, as well as private conversations of the past, and, moreover, he suddenly recognises amongst those attending Mrs Piper's *séances* those whom he knew during life. Dr Hodgson was unable to find any instance when such recognition has been incorrectly given. But G. P. is only one of several trance personations speaking through Mrs Piper's organism and recognised by friends.

After a contemplation of Mrs Piper's trance utterances alone we are inevitably faced by a choice of three conclusions: either (1) fraud (and fraud I hold here to be absolutely inadmissible); or (2) the possession of some supernormal power of apprehension; or (3) communication with the spirits of deceased persons.

Dr Hodgson was driven by sheer force of logic to accept the third of these hypotheses. Others who have studied the phenomena have followed. Dr J. H. Hyslop has published a record of the sittings held with Mrs Piper in 1898 and 1899. His report contains the verbatim record of seventeen sittings, and no pains have been spared to make the record complete. It has exhaustive commentaries and accounts of experiments intended to elucidate the supposed difficulties of trance communication. Professor Hyslop finally arrives at the conclusion, after an extensive investigation, during which no

item of the evidence has failed to be weighed and no possible source of error would seem to have escaped consideration, that spirit communication is the only explanation which fits all the facts, and he altogether rejects telepathy as being inadequate.

I hope that those who have so far followed me in this brief inquiry into the mysteries of occult phenomena will recognise the impartiality with which I have endeavoured to conduct it. I said in the beginning that I set out with a light heart as well as an open mind. I had no idea of the extent of the territory, I knew little of its voluminous literature, of the extraordinary ramifications of occultism, of the labours of the many learned men who have spent their whole lives in seeking to separate fact from superstition. My mind was light because, frankly, I believed—with a sort of inherent, temperamental belief—that, however much the testimony concerning coincident dreams, hallucinations, mediumistic manifestations, materialisation, and clairvoyance might mystify, it was all capable of normal explanation—there was nothing supernatural about it. And so throughout the inquiry I sought to show how, chiefly, telepathy was a working hypothesis in most of the manifestations, while for the physical ones, such as table rapping, levitations, and the rest, an unknown extension of human muscular power might possibly exist to solve the mystery. So far I strode forward with some confidence. But now the time has come when my confidence deserts me. Telepathy breaks down. It is a key which by no amount of wriggling will turn the lock. "It is not," as one leading inquirer has said, "that telepathy is insufficient: it is superfluous." If the existence of disembodied spirits is proved, then all the other phenomena are also proved.

If the case of Mrs Piper—under rigid surveillance for years—has convinced some of the profoundest intellects of the day—men who began by being sceptical—that disembodied spirits are responsible for her utterances, it would certainly tend to convince me. But I carefully guarded myself from conviction until I had read the evidence—even to a *résumé* of this medium's utterances last year in London under the auspices of the Society for Psychical Research—and I assert with confidence that no metaphysical theory has ever been formulated that will account for these manifestations save one—the

survival of the human personality after death. Once Mrs Piper is admitted as genuine, then it follows that the spiritistic manifestations which have puzzled mankind, not merely for generations or during the modern cult of spiritism, but ever since primitive times, become, as it were, emancipated.

"It does seem to me," said Mr Balfour, in his famous Society for Psychical Research address, "that there is at least strong ground for supposing that outside the world, as we have, from the point of science, been in the habit of conceiving it, there does lie a region, not open indeed to experimental observation in the same way as the more familiar regions of the material world are open to it, but still with regard to which some experimental information may be laboriously gleaned; and even if we cannot entertain any confident hope of discovering what laws these half-seen phenomena obey, at all events it will be some gain to have shown, not as a matter of speculation or conjecture, but as a matter of ascertained fact, that there are things in heaven and earth not hitherto dreamed of in our scientific philosophy."

AFTERWORD

And so our little tour into the occult is ended and we return into the glare of common things—things which we know and can touch and find a practical use for. If only a little of this light we hold so cheap were to illumine the tenebrous fastnesses we have just left, then, perhaps we, in our dull worldly way, might be able to assimilate the mystic to the common, the unseen to the seen, the unknown to the known. But we are not vouchsafed this white light; yet, even in the shadows to which our eyes have grown accustomed, we have heard enough to make us wonder and maybe make us doubtful when some voice, even such a voice as Matthew Arnold's, cries out to us: "Miracles are touched by Ithuriel's spear"—"Miracles do not happen."

True, miracles do not happen: but there are events of frequent occurrence in this age, as in all ages of which we have a record, which are miraculous in the sense of their being supernormal—for which science offers no consistent explanation. Is not hypnotism a miracle? Is not telepathy a miracle? Is not the divining rod a miracle? Would Sir William Ramsay or Sir James Crichton-Browne throw these manifestations into the limbo of humbug and charlatanism? And supposing they, and such as they, continue incredulous—is not incredulity a fixed quantity in any society? Were men ever unanimous in their impressions—in their prepossessions, in the chromatic quality with which they steep every surrounding fact before they allow their critical faculties to be focussed upon it?

It may be objected by the reader that I who have led him on this little tour into the wilderness of the occult have myself seen no ghosts. Where are my own experiences? Where the relation of my own personal contact with hypnotists, telepathists, mediums, mysteries? Would not that have been of interest? It may be so: if the phenomena appertaining to those in their best and most convincing quality were always to appear on a casual summons and if I were confided in by the public at large as a sane, unprejudiced witness.

Granted that I have seen no ghosts, I have at least done this: I have met the

men—better men—who have. That at the beginning was the real purpose of my brief itinerary. I designed less a tour into the occult itself than an examination of witnesses for the occult whom I met on the literary bypaths of occultism. This I hope I have done, not satisfactorily—very hurriedly—yet honestly, and wanting like a returned traveller to tell folks more ignorant than myself of what I had heard of wonders which each man must, in the last resort, see for himself and meditate upon for himself.

The blind leading the blind—yea—but—he who hath ears let him hear!

One word more. I should like to see a census of all the minds which embrace a belief in the truth of supernormal phenomena. It would astonish the sceptic. It would reveal to him that the attitude of society at large towards spiritualism and the other world is not the attitude of any but a fraction of the component parts of society—not even the evenly balanced attitude of Huxley towards God Almighty. We should see something quite different; something even distinct and apart from religion. We should see men, often without any religion at all properly speaking, breaking out into the ejaculation of Hamlet to Horatio and refusing to believe that certain occurrences in their experience are to be explained away by chance or delusion. And even in religious men the conviction seems to me secular rather than arising from orthodox faith.

"Far be it from me," wrote Emerson, "the impatience which cannot brook the supernatural, the vast: far be it from me the lust of explaining away all which appeals to the imagination and the great presentiments which haunt us. Willingly I, too, say Hail! to the unknown artful powers which transcend the ken of the understanding." Amen!

Only yesterday I picked up a book, a sort of literary autobiography, by the author of "Sherlock Holmes," to find the following passage:—

"I do not think the hypothesis of coincidence can cover the facts. It is one of several incidents in my life which have convinced me of spiritual interposition—of the promptings of some beneficent force outside ourselves which tries to help us where it can."

[1] The Spectator, *I believe, alone, generously supported me, and in an editorial article on 30th September 1876 expressed the hope that "the British Association would really lake some action on the subject of the paper, in spite of the protests of the party, which we may call the party of superstitious incredulity*."

[2] It will be found on page 178 of "L'Inconnu et les Problemes Psychiques."

[3] Dr Hutton does not say *how* he knew that water was, or was not, below the surface. He was not, however, one likely to make loose and random statements. According to a footnote in *The Quarterly Review*, vol. xxii. p. 374, it appears that the ground chosen for the experiment was a field Dr Hutton had bought, adjoining the new College at Woolwich, then building.

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